

BERNANKE'S NEW DEAL ■ GLENN BECK'S MYTHS ■ SCIALABBA ON T.S. ELIOT

DECEMBER 2010

The American Conservative

Peace Out!

How The Left Was Lost

by Justin Raimondo



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The American Conservative

4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140 • Arlington, VA 22203-1613

Dear Reader,

The American Conservative is back, thanks to your support.

Since our last issue in August, in which we asked for your help to keep *TAC* in print, the outpouring of generosity has been immense. We've raised over \$100,000 toward closing the magazine's shortfall, and what is especially remarkable is the sheer volume of readers who gave whatever they could—from a few dollars to tens of thousands—to ensure *TAC* would carry on. I am deeply grateful.

Now that the magazine has returned, there are great things to come. This is an urgent hour for the traditional Right. With the neoconservatism of the Bush administration and the liberalism of Obama equally discredited, *TAC* is more important than ever. Readers on college campuses have been flocking to our banner, and there is a new generation of legislators in Washington who need to hear the voice of principle, not the squawking of ideologues.

Our summer hiatus has sapped none of our strength—and our months away will not count against your subscription. You will continue to receive every issue through your renewal. With this edition, we pick up exactly where we left off.

In one sense, *TAC* is stronger than ever: we now know how deeply the support for our mission runs. Armed with this knowledge, we can set in motion plans for the magazine's long-term development.

With support at the levels we received this summer, *The American Conservative* will continue to be delivered to your mailbox or newsstand for years to come. And as we approach our tenth anniversary in 2012, *TAC* will begin doing even more to promote our ideas. Not only are we improving our website, www.amconmag.com—which receives over 250,000 unique visits a month—but as additional support comes into place, you will be seeing and hearing more from *TAC* writers on radio and television as well.

As always, the magazine will remain the centerpiece—the key institution in the revival of a conservatism that stands for peace, liberty, and uncompromising honesty. *TAC* has brought together a constellation of intellectual talent that shares a mission of wresting the Right away from those who have hijacked it in the name of nation-building abroad and nation-wrecking at home. Your help in this effort, whether as a subscriber or donor, ensures that thoughtful conservatism will continue to be heard in America's public square.

Sincerely,



Daniel McCarthy
Editor

P.S.: *The American Conservative* makes a great Christmas gift. Visit amconmag.com/subscribe to order a subscription for a friend.

Contents

December 2010 / Vol. 9, No. 9



NEWS.COM

[COVER]

Peace Out

BY JUSTIN RAIMONDO The antiwar Left made Obama president—and President Obama unmade the antiwar Left. **Page 6**

[IMMIGRATION]

Bleeding Arizona

BY ED WARNER Mexico's narco-violence crosses the border. **Page 18**

[ECONOMICS]

Fed 2.0

BY MICHAEL BRENDAN DOUGHERTY Ben Bernanke reinvents central banking as central planning. **Page 22**

[IDEAS]

The Critic as Radical

BY GEORGE SCIALABBA T.S. Eliot's conservatism was nearly as revolutionary as his poetry. **Page 26**

COVER ILLUSTRATION: CHRIS HIERS

COLUMNS

- 9 Patrick J. Buchanan:** How Welfare States Die
17 William Lind: Four Generations of War
50 Bill Kauffman: American Graffiti

NEWS & VIEWS

- 4 Front Lines:** Europe Turns on Keynes; Millionaires Need Welfare Too; Pentagon Book-Burning
16 Deep Background: Israeli warfare goes viral.
29 Old & Right: Isabel Paterson on what ruined Rome

ARTICLES

- 10 W. James Antle III:** Fiscal discipline means cutting defense, too.
12 Jordan Michael Smith: John Lennon said no to the counterculture.
14 Stephen Baskerville: Why the Right is losing the gay-marriage debate
15 Chase Madar: FrumForum's battle plan
30 Doug Bandow: On the ground in Kabul
32 Kevin Lynch: Joseph Sobran was *National Review's* MVP
34 Sean Scallan: Barry Goldwater's book launched a revolution
36 Paul Gottfried: Glenn Beck is wrong about Progressives

ARTS & LETTERS

- 39 Kelly Jane Torrance:** Mario Vargas Llosa, freedom's laureate
41 James Matthew Wilson: *The Essential Santayana: Selected Writings*, ed. by Martin A. Coleman
43 Daniel J. Flynn: *Proud to Be Right: Voices of the Next Conservative Generation*, ed. by Jonah Goldberg
45 Eamonn Fingleton: *The Betrayal of American Prosperity* by Clyde Prestowitz and *How the Economy Was Lost* by Paul Craig Roberts
48 R.J. Stove: *Cosima Wagner: The Lady of Bayreuth* by Oliver Hilmes

[ECONOMY]

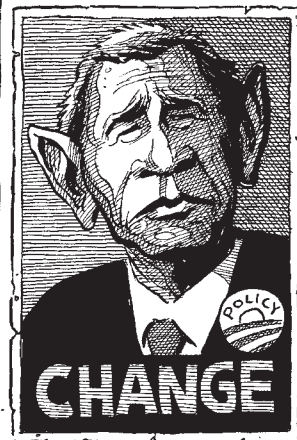
AUSTERITY NOW

Prime Minister David Cameron is doing in Great Britain what the political class insists is impossible in America—imposing severe cuts on the welfare state and warfare state alike. As Pat Buchanan recently noted, Cameron “is making Maggie Thatcher look like Tip O’Neill” by slashing the UK’s military budget by 8 percent and eliminating 490,000 government jobs by 2015.

Cameron is far from the only European leader embracing austerity. Across the continent—even in France, where President Nicolas Sarkozy’s attempts to raise the retirement age have led to nationwide strikes—“everyone wants to reduce their deficits in what is beginning to look like a race to deflation,” as the *Financial Times*’s Philip Stephens says. A little deflation may be exactly what those economies need.

For America’s policymakers—above all for Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke—“deflation” means “depression.” Our leaders believe the only way out of a bust is another boom: a new bubble to be pumped up by yet more government stimulus (the Keynesian approach) or by cutting taxes to encourage private consumption (what Republicans prefer). Either way, spending equals prosperity.

During the Cold War, Barry Goldwater once suggested that the United States and Soviet Union were on a trajectory to trade places, as Russians discovered socialism didn’t work while Americans grew steadily—if often covertly—more statist. Europe today proves the Arizona senator’s point: inflationary welfare economics stands discredited in France and Britain, countries that went much further down the road to socialism than we ever did. Washington, meanwhile, yet dreams of getting everything for nothing—of universal healthcare and armadas of air-



ADAM ZYGIS WWW.CAGECARTOONS.COM

craft carriers, all financed with generous credit from the Chinese. Let’s learn from Britain’s Tea Party Tory before it’s too late.

[JOBS]

BUFFETT’S SAFETY NET

The headline from Bloomberg.com could just as easily have come from satirical newspaper *The Onion*—“Some 3,000 Millionaires Claim Jobless Benefits, IRS Data Show.” Corporate welfare is old news, but a dole for distressed CEOs?

Three thousand mooching millionaires was “a larger number than I would have expected,” the American Enterprise Institute’s Alan Viard told Bloomberg, “But, people at any income level can lose their jobs.” True enough, and just like many other welfare-state benefits, unemployment insurance—as the dole is euphemistically known—is not means tested. If Berkshire Hathaway were to fire Warren Buffett tomorrow, the billionaire would be every bit as entitled as the lowliest outsourced autoworker to \$300 a week from Uncle Sam.

The nation gets by on the little lies we tell ourselves: welfare for everybody—rich, poor, or middle class, to whatever extent there still is a middle class—is no departure from the principles of free enterprise and self-responsibility. As the Urban Institute’s Robertson Williams insisted to Bloomberg, “Getting an insurance payment doesn’t depend on need but only on suffering an insured loss. We don’t say that your homeowners’ policy shouldn’t pay off if you’re a millionaire.” *The Onion* couldn’t have put it better.

[LIBERTIES]

STEAL THIS BOOK

In *Bomb Power*, Garry Wills points out that much official secrecy is intended less to keep our enemies in the dark than to prevent Americans from discovering what the White House and Pentagon are up to. Think about President Nixon’s “secret bombing” of Cambodia—it was hardly a secret to the Cambodians or Viet Cong.

This is the context in which to view ongoing releases from WikiLeaks, the Internet portal that does what the

Freedom of Information Act does not. When the site released 70,000 previously classified Afghan War documents, hyperventilating officials chastised the group for endangering the lives of our local allies. But in a letter to Senator Carl Levin, Defense Secretary Gates admitted that information disclosed by WikiLeaks did not compromise any key intelligence sources. NATO officials also confirmed that no Afghans sought protection as a result of the documents dump.

Gates can't do much about WikiLeaks, but a little old-fashioned book burning is well within the Pentagon's means, as Afghan War veteran Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer discovered in September. His memoir, *Operation Dark Heart*, was cleared by the Army in January. But the Defense Intelligence Agency had a problem with the book—particularly the claim that a data-mining project called "Operation Able Danger" identified Mohammad Atta as a threat before the 9/11 attacks.

(That points to another problem with U.S. intelligence: its vacuum-cleaner approach to information gathering means there is very little chance that important knowledge can be sifted from the noise.)

No one has a right to embarrass military intelligence, so the Pentagon bought out and destroyed the first edition of *Operation Dark Heart* and leaned on publisher St. Martin's Press to redact the second printing—which they did.

The story would have an unhappy ending, except that pre-publication copies of the uncensored book had already begun to circulate, and it won't be long before WikiLeaks or other outlets make the unredacted text available to all. Naturally, Pentagon's actions have only boosted interest in Shaffer's book, which shot up the Amazon.com sales charts as news of the suppression

broke. Keeping secrets from the public is getting harder every day, but Washington still makes valiant efforts.

[FEDERALISM]

THE NEXT BAILOUT

Public-employee unions are bleeding state governments dry. Even with stalled economies, states pick up the tab for retiring workers' generous benefits. In California, legislators must find another \$500 billion to cover what has already been promised, according to a recent Stanford study. The Pew Center on the States estimates that all states together face at least a \$1 trillion shortfall in paying for public employees' pensions.

What caused this mess? The rise of public-sector unions was once considered a perversion of the 19th-century notion of collective bargaining between workers and private, profit-seeking firms. But over the last century, these rent-seeking gangs have come to define union membership: in 2010, for the first time, an outright majority of union cardholders were government employees.

Many states have already fought unions to shift retirement plans from defined benefits to defined contributions, in which beneficiaries share investment risks. But these changes only apply to new employees, and that doesn't help reduce the shortfall for benefits already coming due. Some states are seeking to raise the retirement age, but this faces inevitable challenges from the unions in the courts.

Unlike the federal government, states can't simply borrow or print more notes to cover their deficits—though California did try handing out IOU's. Don't be surprised if another massive federal bailout—this time to cover state pension plans—is soon on the way from Washington. The American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees doesn't pay rent on K Street for nothing. ■

The American Conservative

Publisher
Ron Unz

Editor
Daniel McCarthy
Senior Editor
Lewis McCrary

Contributing Editors

W. James Antle III, Andrew J. Bacevich, Doug Bandow, Jeremy Beer, James Bovard, Patrick Deneen, Michael Desch, Michael Dougherty, Richard Gamble, Philip Giraldi, David Gordon, Paul Gottfried, Freddy Gray, Leon Hadar, Peter Hitchens, Philip Jenkins, Daniel Larison, Christopher Layne, Chase Madar, Eric Margolis, James Pinkerton, Justin Raimondo, Fred Reed, Stuart Reid, Sheldon Richman, Steve Sailer, John Schwenkler, R.J. Stove, Kelley Vlahos, Thomas E. Woods Jr.

Illustrator
Chris Hiers

Associate Publisher
Jon Basil Utley

Publishing Consultant
Ronald E. Burr

Editorial Assistant
Robert Chapman-Smith

Founding Editors
Patrick J. Buchanan, Scott McConnell, Taki Theodoracopoulos

The American Conservative, Vol. 9, No. 9, December 2010 (ISSN 1540-966X). Reg. U.S. Pat. & Tm. Off. TAC is published 12 times per year for \$49.97 per year by The American Ideas Institute, 4040 Fairfax Dr., Suite 140, Arlington, VA, 22203. Periodicals postage paid at Arlington, VA, and additional mailing offices. Printed in the United States of America. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030.

Subscription rates: \$49.97 per year (12 issues) in the U.S., \$69.97 in Canada (U.S. funds), and \$89.97 other foreign via airmail. Back issues: \$6.00 (prepaid) per copy in USA, \$7.00 in Canada (U.S. funds).

For subscription orders, payments, and other subscription inquiries —

By phone: **800-579-6148**
(outside the U.S./Canada 856-380-4131)

Via Web: www.amconmag.com

By mail: *The American Conservative*, P.O. Box 9030, Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

Please allow 6-8 weeks for delivery of your first issue.

Inquiries and letters to the editor should be sent to letters@amconmag.com. For advertising sales call Ronald Burr at 703-893-3632. For editorial, call 703-875-7600.

This issue went to press on October 22, 2010.
Copyright 2010 *The American Conservative*.

Peace Out

By betraying his antiwar base, Obama has doomed the Democrats and created a new Right.

By Justin Raimondo

LAST YEAR AROUND THIS TIME the Pew Research Center organization undertook its annual overview of American opinion on foreign affairs. The idea is to measure the views of America's foreign policy elite—as embodied by the members of the Council on Foreign Relations—against the views of the American *hoi polloi*, i.e., you and I. The results sent shockwaves through the foreign-policy establishment.

Asked if the United States should “mind its own business internationally and let other countries get along the best they can on their own,” 49 percent of Americans answered yes—“an all-time high,” according to the authors of the Pew report. But among the experts, policy wonks, and Washington insiders, answers in the affirmative to that question came to exactly ... zero.

This astonishing disparity demonstrates something we already knew: that the distance between the Washington mentality and the views of ordinary Americans can only be measured in light years. Washington's conventional wisdom is anything but conventional out in the real world—and the gap between these two worldviews is growing, not just in foreign policy but also here on the home front. Nothing demonstrates this ideological dissonance more dramatically than the rise of the Tea Party movement, the militantly anti-spending, anti-Washington tide that has swept incumbents out of office all across the country.

Democratic lawmakers who went back to their districts to sell Obamacare to their constituents found themselves confronted by crowds of angry citizens and shouted down. And was this ire was not targeted only at Democrats: long-time Republican officeholders who had never faced a serious primary challenge were suddenly confronted with real opposition. If they voted for TARP, they were fair game—and one by one the Tea Partiers took them out: Bennett, Murkowski, Castle. Republicans who went to bed on primary night believing in the divine right of incumbency woke up to the new reality: all bets were off.

This came as quite a surprise—an unpleasant one—to the pundits and political operatives who make up the world of Washington insiderdom. What in the name of the gods was going on here? they exclaimed. Given to trite answers, they came up with a few non-explanations: pulling their dog-eared copies of Richard Hofstadter's *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* off the shelves, they declared the Tea Partiers to be a symptom of “status resentment,” which according to Professor Hofstadter's ad hominem argument always gives rise to “extremism.” In short, the bad economy must have put voters in a foul mood, and since we all know people are motivated solely by how much money they are—or aren't—making, the soon-to-be-dawning recovery will cure them of their crankiness.

The problem with this analysis is that signs of dissatisfaction had been apparent for years, yet no one was paying attention. If we roll the Wayback Machine all the way to the beginning of the last presidential primary season, well before the crash of '08, evidence of a rising insurgency is abundant. It wasn't a right-wing insurgency, however, but rather one on the Left, the movement that allowed Barack Obama to upend the all-but-crowned heir apparent to the Democratic throne, Queen Hillary I, and propelled a one-term senator into the White House.

The anti-establishment force behind Obama was one that had lain dormant for a generation: the grassroots Left. It was reawakened by the same causes that had first given it life in the 1960s—opposition to war and demands for civil liberty. Torture, executive secrecy, and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan filled the roles once played by segregation and the war in Vietnam. In 2008 as in 1968, the essence of the activist Left was its antiwar faith.

That faith proved difficult to maintain after the 1960s, as the conflict in Indochina wound down and left-wing activists turned their attention to identity politics. But the Left's social issues and statist economics have never been enough to sustain a popular movement. Nevertheless, after nominating peace candidate George McGovern in 1972, the Democratic Party deserted the anti-

war cause, terrified of being branded unpatriotic.

Deprived of its reason to exist, the grassroots Left dissolved. The radicals retreated to the faculty lounges they had once threatened to burn down, while their less ideological fellow travelers melted into the mainstream.

It was only in response to great shock—the 9/11 terrorist attacks and George W. Bush’s subsequent crusade to democratize the Muslim world—that these ex-Trotskyites-turned-suburbanites woke from their narcotized sleep. The resurgent Left had an ongoing drama to validate its concerns: the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the spectacle of untrammelled executive power running roughshod over the Constitution. When the war cries that had greeted Bush’s call of “let’s roll!” began to sour in the mouths of the American people, the grassroots Left took off, with Howard Dean—a right-of-center Democrat who supported gun rights and claimed to be a fiscal conservative—at its head.

As a contender for the 2004 Democratic nomination, Dean’s big attraction was his critique of the decision to invade Iraq, and he went after his primary opponents early and forcefully. “I was able to sort out that the president was not being candid with the American people,” he said at a candidates’ debate in Iowa. “We have lost 500 soldiers and 2,200 wounded. Those soldiers were sent there by the vote of Senator Lieberman and Senator Kerry and Senator Edwards. That is a fact. And I think that’s a very serious matter. And it is a matter upon which we differ.”

Alas, Dean was angry before angry was “in,” and he was blocked from the nomination by media-driven hysteria over the “Dean scream.” After the thousandth repetition of the “scream” video in a 24-hour period, the Dean camp was cooked—but lived to fight another day.

The underground current of anti-interventionist “mind our own business” sentiment that had fueled Dean didn’t go away: instead, it percolated at the grassroots, perfecting its anger at being excluded and awaiting a chance for expression. The “netroots”—the online community of lefty activists centered around the Daily Kos, Democratic Underground, and a plethora of other sites—were born.

The netroots were given their shot in 2006, when candidates they recruited and championed punished Republicans for their all-war-all-the-time foreign policy. The elections that year were a referendum on the neoconservative vision of an American empire, which voters rejected by returning control of Congress to the Democrats. The anti-interventionist trend, however, still hadn’t peaked.

THE ANTIWAR LEFT MADE OBAMA PRESIDENT. IN RETURN, PRESIDENT OBAMA UNMADE THE ANTIWAR LEFT, EVEN AS POPULAR OUTRAGE OVER HIS DOMESTIC POLICIES REVIVED THE RIGHT.

In 2007, all the world knew that Hillary Clinton was going to be the Democratic nominee, by right of dynastic succession. The pundits would have anointed Hillary that spring, all on their own, had it not been for the bothersome ritual of actually having to send the voters to the polls, a quaintly archaic custom that the elites haven’t gotten around to abolishing yet.

Obama dogged Hillary over her vote in favor of the Iraq War and made an explicit appeal to the netroots and the antiwar movement. That gave him the momentum to snatch the crown from her brow. It didn’t matter that he justified his opposition to the war on the grounds that we were prosecuting the “wrong” war and vowed to fight on the

Afghan front with greater vigor than his predecessor. At that point, the anti-interventionist base of the Democratic Party was ready to nominate anybody but Hillary.

The netroots convinced themselves Obama didn’t really mean it: he was just talking tough to prove his national-security bona fides. Once elected, he would come out as a full-fledged antiwar bring-the-troops-homie. We all know how *that* turned out. Those Bush-haters who saw the Patriot Act and increased domestic surveillance as prefiguring a dictatorship can take no comfort in the Obama administration, which has defended and extended the legal precedents set by Bush.

The antiwar Left defeated itself by electing a Democrat little different from Bush. And now Barack Obama is dismantling his own party by repudiating

the causes that animated his base—the opposition to war and fear of the imperial presidency. In the run-up to the midterm elections, Obama tried instead to mobilize his party around the weakest items on its agenda: big government and cultural issues. No wonder Democrats and the progressive Left are demoralized: is the party’s antiwar base really supposed to get excited about gays in the military?

The antiwar Left made Obama president. In return, President Obama unmade the antiwar Left, even as popular outrage over his domestic policies revived the Right. Progressives now face the same kind of embarrassment that conservatives experienced under Bush. As left-wing writer John V. Walsh notes,

Obama was not, and is not, simply the candidate of the Democrats. He was and is the candidate of the most “liberal” or “progressive” wing of the Democratic Party, the candidate of “Progressive” Democrats of America, of Norman Solomon, Medea Benjamin, Michael Moore, and on and on. If this wing of the Democratic Party betrays the hopes of its supporters, then surely there is nothing decent remaining in the party. And so it has become apparent in the last two years.

In 2006 and 2008, voters banished Republicans for getting us involved in endless wars and going on a spending spree. The same fate awaits the Democrats—and for the same reasons. But in the years to come the GOP may yet save the Obama administration by pursuing its own version of electoral suicide.

During the last decade, Republicans and their allies in the conservative movement abandoned fiscal conservatism to promote Bush’s “Freedom Agenda.” As a result, once the rally-’round-the-flag effect wore off in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, Republicans had nothing to offer either their traditional base or independent voters. It took two years for a grassroots effort by conservative and libertarian activists, united in the Tea Party movement, to refocus the GOP on its core economic credo.

The upending of the Republican establishment by the Tea Partiers in the 2010 primaries has restored conservatives’ political viability—at least for the moment. But the GOP could easily blow its opportunity. Just as Obama demoralized his base and mobilized his enemies by pushing the wrong mix of foreign-policy hawkishness and domestic statism, Republicans like Mitt Romney are itching to pull another bait-and-switch on the Right by putting militarism ahead of domestic conservatism.

The foreign policy pursued by the Bush administration and upheld by virtually every Republican of national stature—Ron Paul excepted—is simply incompatible with the Tea Partiers’ commitment to cutting spending and reducing the scope of the federal government. Yet the GOP and leading conservatives remain in denial about the domestic economic consequences of an imperial foreign policy. Mark Meckler, a national Tea Party coordinator, expresses the grassroots’ view, “I have yet to hear anyone say, ‘We can’t touch defense spending,’ or any other issue ... Any tea partier who says something else lacks integrity.”

Much as the netroots and Obama’s activist cadres cut their teeth on the Dean campaign, it’s no accident that the Tea Party phenomenon began with Ron Paul’s 2008 run. His activists planned the first small Tea Parties later that year,

principles. Should Republicans proceed again as they did under Bush, the cycle will repeat—another war, another resurgence of the Left.

Both parties, in spite of their strenuous efforts, have failed to carry off a political realignment. If we vote Democrat, we get big spenders, a cultural agenda many Americans regard with distaste or indifference, and empty promises of peace dangled in front of our faces—and quickly jerked out of reach. If we vote Republican, we get big spenders engaged in endless wars and a cultural agenda many Americans find disturbing or irrelevant.

That neither party is consistently able to satisfy its base—let alone the broader American public—suggests that conditions are ripe for an upheaval in American politics. In some ways, the climate today resembles the one that brought forth the New Left in the 1960s. Support

THE DEMOCRATS’ DECLINE OWES NOTHING TO REPUBLICAN LEADERS; IT IS ENTIRELY THE RESULT OF OBAMA BETRAYING THE ANTIWAR LEFT.

taking their inspiration not only from the original Boston Tea Party but also from the moneybomb Paul’s supporters held on its anniversary in 2007. The anti-statist Right, no less than the grassroots Left, draws strength from the public’s frustration with the bipartisan foreign-policy elite. The Tea Parties may be primarily concerned with Obama’s domestic programs, but key segments of activists are antiwar as well as anti-spending. They kept the flame of consistency alive through the dark days of the Bush administration.

The Democrats’ decline owes nothing to Republican leaders like John Boehner or Mitch McConnell; it is entirely the result of Obama betraying the antiwar Left at the same time as the grassroots Right finally returned to its economic

for the war in Afghanistan is at an all-time low: according to a recent CNN poll, a mere 37 percent support it, while 53 percent say it’s “another Vietnam.” At the same time, the scene also resembles the one that fostered the anti-tax revolts and New Right of the 1970s. All of this could give rise to a new majority coalition, perhaps one encompassing the best of the Tea Partiers, Ron Paul Republicans, Pat Buchanan brigades, and the long-quiescent Perot voters.

One thing is certain: thanks to Barack Obama, the change this country seeks will not come from the Left. ■

Justin Raimondo is editorial director of Antiwar.com and author of Reclaiming the American Right: The Lost Legacy of the Conservative Movement.



How Welfare States Die

For the fourth day running, France has been crippled by strikes. Airlines are canceling flights. Travelers making their way to Paris from de Gaulle and Orly face long delays.

Tourists are stranded. The Eiffel Tower was closed. Rail and subway traffic into the city has been curtailed. By shutting down refineries, French oil workers may cause a shutdown of gas stations and force the government to raid the strategic petroleum reserve.

Millions have gone on strike. One in ten high schools has been closed. Students at secondary schools and universities march beside workers and block entrances to paralyze the educational system. And what is the cause of this national tantrum?

President Nicolas Sarkozy has moved through the National Assembly and is pushing through the Senate a measure raising the retirement age for state pensions from 60 to 62. For if France does not raise that retirement age, its social security system will face a \$58 billion deficit by 2018. Sarkozy's reform follows his victory in repealing a decade-old Socialist law that mandated the 35-hour work week in France.

What world, one wonders, are these French living in?

Around 2050, those high school and college students will be near or above today's retirement age of 60. Who do they think is going to pony up for their pensions?

Today 23 percent of French men and women are 60 or older. That will rise to 33 percent by 2050, when there will be one French worker for each French retiree, if 60 is retained as the age of retirement.

Today 5.5 percent of French men and women are 80 or older. By 2050, that doubles to 11 percent. Who do the

French strikers think is going to pay the taxes for the medical expenses of this infirm and aged ninth of a nation?

Where the median age of the French is 40, in 2050 it will be 45. But that number disguises a far drearier reality.

Since 1970, the fertility rate of French women has been below the 2.1 children needed to sustain France's population, what demographers call zero population growth. For the next four decades until 2050, the fertility level of French women is projected to remain roughly 15 percent below ZPG.

Yet France's population of 62.6 million is projected to make a healthy leap to 67.7 million. How can a population continue to grow when the birth rate for almost 80 years running to 2050 is below replacement level?

Answer: As the French retire, age and die, France is filling up with immigrants coming to replace the departed and departing French and the millions of French children who were never born because their potential parents did not want them.

Where are the immigrants coming from?

Some come from Eastern Europe. But more are arriving from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and the former French colonies of the sub-Sahara. Arabs and Africans are populating cities like Marseilles and Grenoble, and filling up the burgeoning banlieues around Paris, where every few years they go on a tear and burn thousands of cars. For Paris police, the *banlieues* are off-limits, except when traveling in platoons.

These immigrants do not bring the occupational skills, education, or language abilities of French youth. Most will not earn the wages and salaries of native-born French and thus not contribute the same level of taxes to sustain a welfare state constructed by a Socialist Party that has ruled France on and off for decades.

With the end of the 35-hour work-week and retirement at 60, the peeling back of social welfare benefits granted to the French in the salad days of socialism has only just begun. They can march and protest and strike, but they cannot avert the inevitable.

What is true of France is true of Europe, where not one nation has a fertility rate that will replace its native-born. Among Russians, Ukrainians, Estonians, Lithuanians, and Latvians, the death rate already exceeds the birth rate.

With the financial crisis of 2008-09, followed by the threatened debt default of one or more of the European Union PIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Greece, Spain), all of Europe also seems to be slashing defense budgets to save all they can of their welfare states. Which raises questions we debt-swamped Americans cannot put off forever. Why, 65 years after World War II, are we still defending these nations? When Europe has more wealth, more people, and a more lavish welfare state than we do, why should we impose sacrifices on our people to pay for the privilege of defending her people?

Instead of borrowing from Europe to defend Europe, why do we not charge them for providing that protection? If we are going to play Romans, why not demand tribute, as the Romans did? America is the first empire in history to pay tribute to its satraps. ■

Defense on a Diet

Cutting the Pentagon is a question of strategy—as well as fiscal sanity.

By W. James Antle III

IN HIS STATE of the Union address, President Barack Obama made an attempt to placate critics of his fiscal profligacy by proposing a three-year freeze in federal spending. Republicans immediately cried foul, noting that outlays would remain stuck at the administration's bloated levels. The more serious among them also point out that Obama excluded the biggest entitlement programs—Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security—making his moratorium no exercise in spending restraint at all.

Yet there were fewer objections to the fourth category of spending Obama exempted: expenditures “related to our national security.” No one wants the federal government to pinch pennies when it comes to its paramount constitutional responsibility, protecting the physical security of the United States. But the Cato Institute's Christopher Preble and the National Security Network's Heather Hurlbut argued shortly afterward in *Politico* that much of what is spent in the name of security serves no such purpose.

Even freezing defense spending at current levels would be an expensive bargain: the Pentagon's base budget was \$548.9 billion in fiscal 2011. That's not counting the additional \$182 billion requested that year for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, conflicts that have already cost the country \$1 trillion. Costs can be expected to rise even more: inflation-adjusted military spending has increased by 60 percent over the past decade, prompting Preble and Hurlbut to write, “because our national security rests on our economic health as well

as on the strength of our military, a liberal and a libertarian can agree that the Pentagon should no longer get a pass.”

Such agreement is easy enough to find among think-tank academics, especially those employed by institutions that specifically advocate limited government or scrutinize the military-industrial complex. But there's far less appetite for it on Capitol Hill, especially among the Republican congressmen currently beating their chests about excessive government spending—though Democrats are seldom much better.

Congressmen Barney Frank (D-Mass.) and Ron Paul (R-Tex.) have set out to put defense cuts on the agenda through the recommendations of their Sustainable Defense Task Force, convened for the House Oversight and Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs. Trying to rein in military spending in an era of out-of-control deficits and debt, task force participants took aim squarely at what is most costly: the extent of America's commitments abroad. Promising “a more efficient defense” and “realistic goals, sustainable strategy,” the group put out a report containing an ambitious list of more than a dozen possible cuts saving nearly \$1 trillion in ten years.

The Frank-Paul collaboration would reduce the U.S. military presence in Europe and Asia by one-third and shrink our overall forces accordingly. Similar reductions would accompany withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan. The Navy battle fleet would be cut from 286 ships to 230. F-35 fighter procurement

would be reduced by 220 aircraft; the MV-22 Osprey and the Expeditionary Fighting Vehicle would also be cut. The nuclear arsenal would be reduced, and there would be selective cuts to missile defense and space-based weapons.

Frank and Paul want the effort to be bipartisan, and they are joined by Rep. Walter Jones (R-N.C.) and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.). The Sustainable Defense Task Force report appeals to conservatives early on, with the Hoover Institution's Kori Schake writing, “Conservatives need to hearken back to our Eisenhower heritage.” The number of legislators who have signed on, particularly conservative ones, remains small—but it's a start. Consider that Rep. Paul Ryan's (R-Wis.) “Roadmap,” widely regarded as a blueprint for tackling the looming entitlements crisis, has only nine cosponsors. On the other side, Frank told reporters that if more of his fellow Democrats don't agree to look at the defense budget “then every other issue will suffer.”

Not everyone has embraced the task force's handiwork. The Heritage Foundation's Elizabeth Peturn warns “enacting such recommendations would have dramatic implications for U.S. military superiority, consequences hardly discussed.” *National Review's* Kevin Williamson complained in a piece entitled “How Not to Cut Military Spending,” “What we discover in this report is not a budgetary document, but a pacifists' manifesto.” The Sustainable Defense Task Force achieves its biggest savings by making sweeping changes in defense policy, not by canceling \$700 toilet seats, and was written with the help of peace groups.

Unlike some of the report's other critics, Williamson does not start with the premise that all defense budget cuts are necessarily bad. He identifies himself as one who shares "Mr. Frank's belief that the presence of thousands of U.S. troops in such non-hotspots as Germany is an extravagance and an invitation to excess." But he argues that cost-cutting should concentrate on dollars and cents, while reductions in the nuclear arsenal, for example, should be debated on their own merits. "The Pentagon's budget is as bloated as any typical federal agency's, and its operations as poorly administered," Williamson writes. "There is ample room for cuts in its budget."

Conservative reluctance to cut military spending is somewhat understandable. Unlike other "third rail" spending that is supposed to be off-limits to aspiring budget-cutters, national defense is a legitimate function of government. Entitlements are even more expensive than military, costing about twice as much. The Department of Health and Human Services has a budget about one-fifth larger than the Department of Defense, though some of the difference is due to accounting shenanigans.

Yet defense is by far the biggest discretionary spending program, vastly larger than the combined price tag of those earmarks Republicans so frequently rail against. Past expansions of the social welfare state were paid for by relative declines in military spending—and that is the goal of some Democratic defense-cutters today. But now the welfare-warfare state grows in tandem, a fiscally unsustainable situation. Moreover, if Republicans want to preserve the Reagan and Bush tax cuts they will have to control more than nondefense discretionary spending. With entitlement reform politically perilous, they might be forced to put the Pentagon on a diet.

That will require conservatives to stop thinking of the military as if it's an

honorary member of the private sector rather than a government program. Too often they exempt it from cost-benefit analysis and other reasonable standards they would impose on the rest of the federal budget. Preble, a Sustainable Defense Task Force member, notes that security spending "can be just as likely to result in the misallocation of resources as other public programs."

"If we were really talking about cutting spending that defends the United States, I'd agree with the objections," he continues. "But so much of what we spend is for policing other countries rather than protecting our own." And if Paul and Frank begin their budget review with certain ideological premises about the U.S. military posture, so do their detractors: advocates of the status quo assume a military involved in all the world's hot spots in order to eliminate any conceivable threat. "If that is what our military's role is," Preble says, "then no, we are not spending enough on defense."

Of course, such a view of the military's role applies the precautionary principle that conservatives wisely reject when it comes to environmental policy. "The US spends vast amounts on defences against threats unlikely to affect Americans," writes Preble's Cato colleague Benjamin Friedman. "Experts, defence officials and politicians justify those expenditures by saying they are necessary to protect the public from worst-case dangers." But the result can be refighting old wars, making us less safe as well as less financially secure.

Even fiscal conservatives outside of the think-tank world have started examining these contradictions. The more consistent Tea Party candidates in this year's election did not take defense spending off the table, even if they preferred to concentrate on domestic targets like Obamacare, the stimulus, and

the Wall Street bailout. Neither has Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels, who is considering a run for the GOP presidential nomination on an austerity platform.

"When Bush arrived we were spending \$300 billion on national defense, and he thought that was plenty," Daniels said in an interview with the hawkish *Weekly Standard*, of all places. "Now it's what, \$800 billion?" He later told a writer from *Commentary* that he would "ask questions about the extent of our commitments" abroad. "If we go broke," Daniels argued, "no one will follow a pauper."

It's enough of a shift to elicit a reaction from hawks who want to increase the defense budget. Arthur Brooks, Edwin Feulner, and William Kristol took to the *Wall Street Journal* op-ed page to argue military spending should be restored to something more like its Cold War Reagan-era peak of 6.2 percent of GDP. Kristol edits the *Standard*, while Brooks and Feulner are presidents of the two largest conservative movement think tanks, the American Enterprise Institute and the Heritage Foundation, respectively.

Their argument is that national debt "is a beast that has not principally been fattened on a diet of Pentagon spending." They conclude, "A weaker, cheaper military will not solve our financial woes." Other hawks fear that even a Republican Congress might cut the military budget. "One thing that any new Republican majority in Congress will have to resist is the siren song to cut defense spending," wrote John Guardiano. "Unfortunately, that temptation is real and growing."

It's not as unlikely as it first seems: Republicans have frequently presided over reductions in military spending, with Ronald Reagan's late Cold War defense buildup and George W. Bush's response to 9/11 being the exceptions. These tendencies among conservatives were on display in the 1990s, when

national-security hawks sparred with budget hawks inside the GOP. (House Budget Committee Chairman John Kasich tried to square the circle by proclaiming himself “a cheap hawk.”) The result was a larger contingent of Republican congressmen who were skeptical of military adventurism, especially wars launched for humanitarian purposes by Democratic commanders-in-chief.

The debate isn't simply between conservatives who would increase defense spending and those willing to entertain cuts. The latter group is not homogeneous. Many Republicans are happy to squeeze the usual suspects—waste, fraud, and abuse—out of the Pentagon's budget. Usually this is a dodge, though there is in fact a great deal of waste. Procurement reform is particularly popular because it can save billions without altering policy, reducing the number of troops, or cutting anyone's pay. But purchasing practices have been changed as recently as last year to only modest effect.

Many traditional conservatives favor a strong military that is used sparingly. But Preble argues—at book-length in *The Power Problem*—that the military's size encourages politicians to use force as a first resort. According to this view, rethinking what constitutes defense is not the same as issuing some pie-in-the-sky pacifist manifesto; rather it is the only way to control the Pentagon's budget.

While the Frank-Paul plan is unlikely to pass in its present form, the state of the federal budget will force legislators to look for budget cuts in unusual places. That's likely to lead to more Republican scrutiny of defense spending. Ultimately, however, budget-cutters will find that the republic-versus-empire debate cannot be avoided. ■

W. James Antle III is associate editor of The American Spectator.

Stop Imagining

John Lennon lived long enough to change his mind about God, money, and politics.

By Jordan Michael Smith

AFTER JOHN LENNON was shot on Dec. 8, 1980, thousands of fans spontaneously gathered around his apartment in New York City, imagining what the apostle of peace might have accomplished with the rest of his life. The *New York Times* Neediest Cases Fund received an outpouring of donations, some of which described the late Beatles songwriter as a “humanitarian.”

That was one John Lennon. And it was the one the world chose to remember, the Lennon opposed to the Vietnam War and hosting bed-ins for peace with Yoko Ono. But that was not the only Lennon, nor the final one. In fact, the one who emerged in 1980 after five years of shunning public life held views far removed from those of the counterculture icon. Yet this Lennon—a wiser, more honest self, according to the singer—seems to have been erased from public memory in favor of the bearded prophet perpetually singing “Imagine.”

In the last major interview Lennon gave, to *Playboy* in late 1980 (and later released unedited as a book, *All We Are Saying*), he and Yoko Ono offered opinions that can fairly be described as chastened, jaded, even provincial. The Lennon memorialized in Strawberry Fields in New York City, John Lennon Park in Havana, or the Imagine Peace Tower in Reykjavík—or the Lennon martyred at monuments in Italy, Spain, Peru, Hungary, and England—would not have said the following: “I am not going

to get locked in that business of saving the world on stage. The show is always a mess and the artist always comes off badly... All of you who are reading this, don't bother sending me all that garbage about, ‘Just come and save the Indians, come and save the blacks, come and save the war veterans.’”

When it was pointed out that a Beatles reunion could possibly raise \$200 million for a poverty-stricken country in South America, Lennon had no time for it. “You know, America has poured billions into places like that. It doesn't mean a damn thing. After they've eaten that meal, then what? It lasts for only a day. After the \$200,000,000 is gone, then what? It goes round and round in circles.” It's a critique of foreign aid readers of P.T. Bauer would be familiar with. “You can pour money in forever. After Peru, then Harlem, then Britain. There is no one concert. We would have to dedicate the rest of our lives to one world concert tour, and I'm not ready for it.”

This was not the '60s revolutionary who hung out with Yippies and Black Panthers. Not only did Lennon dismiss his earlier efforts, he rejected the entire idea of social change through political action. “I have never voted for anybody, anytime, ever,” he said. “Even at my most so-called political. I have never registered and I never will. It's going to make a lot of people upset, but that's too bad.”

“I dabbled in so-called politics in the late Sixties and Seventies more out of guilt than anything,” he revealed. “Guilt

for being rich, and guilt thinking that perhaps love and peace isn't enough and you have to go and get shot or something, or get punched in the face, to prove I'm one of the people. I was doing it against my instincts."

For Lennon, the political gave way to the personal and what he saw as a much more important, difficult battle. "The hardest thing is facing yourself," he told *Rolling Stone*. "It's easier to shout 'Revolution' and 'Power to the people' than it is to look at yourself and try to find out what's real inside you and what isn't, when you're pulling the wool over your own eyes. That's the hardest one."

Nothing seems less like the popular idea of Lennon, but there was more. In his definitive song, "Imagine"—Yoko Ono has said its lyrics express "just what John believed"—he famously dreams of a world with "no possessions." The mature Lennon explicitly disavowed such naïve sentiments:

I worked for money and I wanted to be rich. So what the hell—if that's a paradox, then I'm a socialist. But I am not anything. What I used to be is guilty about money. ... Because I thought money was equated with sin. I don't know. I think I got over it, because I either have to put up or shut up, you know. If I'm going to be a monk with nothing, do it. Otherwise, if I am going to try and make money, make it. Money itself isn't the root of all evil.

The man who famously called for imagining a world with "No religion" also jettisoned his anti-theism. "People got the image I was anti-Christ or antireligion," he said. "I'm not at all. I'm a most religious fellow. I'm religious in the sense of admitting there is more to it than meets the eye. I'm certainly not an atheist."

Even more shocking to the idea of Lennon as a secular leftist, or a deep thinker, the man rejected evolution. "Nor do I think we came from monkeys, by the way," he insisted. "That's another piece of garbage. What the hell's it based on? We couldn't've come from anything—fish, maybe, but not monkeys. I don't believe in the evolution of fish to monkeys to men. Why aren't monkeys changing into men now? It's absolute garbage."

To some extent, Lennon simply took the same path that many Baby Boomers followed, from sloganeering left-winger to almost conservative father and hus-

'cause I found out it doesn't f—ing work!

Lennon's disillusionment, if that's what it was, never carried him all the way to the right: he never became a Reagan Democrat, let alone a neoconservative. He was a stay-at-home husband and avowed feminist and remained deeply antiwar until his death. But he was far removed from his adoring fans' image of him as a walking United Nations.

In fact, Lennon died as something of an individualist. "Produce your own dream," he advised in lieu of getting

LENNON'S DISILLUSIONMENT, IF THAT'S WHAT IT WAS, NEVER CARRIED HIM ALL THE WAY TO THE RIGHT ... BUT HE WAS FAR REMOVED FROM HIS ADORING FAN'S IMAGE OF HIM AS A WALKING UNITED NATIONS.

band. His final interviews make clear he was above all concerned with his family. "I'm not here for you," he said, speaking to his fans. "I'm here for me and her and the baby." He revered the institution of marriage, explaining how much it meant to get the state approving his union with Ono. "[R]ituals are important, no matter what we thought as kids. ... So nowadays it's hip not to be married. But I'm not interested in being hip."

More than anything else, the Boomer sense of entitlement enraged him, to the point of sounding a little like another John—the Sex Pistols' Johnny Rotten:

I used to think that the world was doing it to me and that the world owed me something, and that either the conservatives or the socialists or the fascists or the communists or the Christians or the Jews were doing something to me; and when you're a teenybopper, that's what you think. I'm forty now. I don't think that anymore,

involved in politics. "If you want to save Peru, go save Peru. It's quite possible to do anything, but not if you put it on the leaders and the parking meters. Don't expect Carter or Reagan or John Lennon or Yoko Ono or Bob Dylan or Jesus Christ to come and do it for you. You have to do it yourself."

Lennon once sang, in "Revolution," "But when you talk about destruction / don't you know that you can count me out" to express his ambivalence about Weatherman-style violence. By 1980 he was skeptical even about nonviolent social change. "I can't wake you up. You can wake you up. I can't cure you. You can cure you."

He had traveled a long way from his New Left days. This Lennon was more complex, less idealistic than the one on posters and T-shirts worldwide. Imagine that. ■

Jordan Michael Smith has written for The Boston Globe, The Atlantic, and The New Republic.

Divorced From Reality

Don't blame the gays for the decline of marriage.

By Stephen Baskerville

DEFENDERS OF MARRIAGE must face some hard facts or they are going to lose their fight—and with it, quite possibly, their religious freedom as well. Federal judge Vaughn Walker's ruling nullifying Proposition 8 in California illustrates that, unless we can demonstrate very specific reasons why same-sex marriage is socially destructive, it will soon be the law of the land.

With conservatives as prominent as Glenn Beck and Ann Coulter joining those “influential Americans,” in the words of the *National Review*, who “have been coming increasingly to regard opposition to same-sex marriage as irrational at best and bigoted at worst,” we can no longer rely on vague assertions that homosexual marriage weakens true marriage in some way—which in itself, actually, it does not.

Considerable nonsense has been written by some opponents of same-sex marriage, while some critical truths are not being heard. Confronting the facts can enable us to win not only this battle but several even more important ones involving family decline and the social anomie it produces.

First: Marriage exists primarily to cement the father to the family. This fact is politically incorrect but undeniable. The breakdown of marriage produces widespread fatherlessness, not motherlessness. As Margaret Mead pointed out long ago—yes, leftist Margaret Mead was correct about this—motherhood is a biological certainty whereas fatherhood is socially constructed. The father is the weakest link in the family bond, and without the institution of marriage

he is easily discarded.

The consequences of failing to link men to their offspring are apparent the world over. From our inner cities and Native American reservations to the north of England, the *banlieues* of Paris, and much of Africa, fatherlessness—not poverty or race—is the leading predictor of virtually every social pathology among the young. Without fathers, adolescents run wild, and society descends into chaos.

The notion that marriage exists for love or “to express and safeguard an emotional union of adults,” as one proponent puts it, is cant. Many loving and emotional human relationships do not involve marriage. Even the conservative argument that marriage exists to rear children is too imprecise: marriage creates fatherhood. No marriage, no fathers.

Once this principle is recognized, same-sex marriage makes no sense. Judge Walker's “finding of fact” that “gender no longer forms an essential part of marriage” is rendered preposterous. Marriage between two men or two women simply mocks the purpose of the institution. Homosexual parenting only further distances biological fathers (and some mothers too) from their children, since at least some homosexual parents must acquire their children from someone else—usually through heterosexual divorce.

Here is the second unpleasant truth: homosexuals did not destroy marriage, heterosexuals did. The demand for same-sex marriage is a symptom, not a cause, of the deterioration of marriage. By far the most direct threat to the

family is heterosexual divorce. “Commentators miss the point when they oppose homosexual marriage on the grounds that it would undermine traditional understandings of marriage,” writes family scholar Bryce Christensen. “It is only because traditional understandings of marriage have already been severely undermined that homosexuals are now laying claim to it.”

Though gay activists cite their desire to marry as evidence that their lifestyle is not inherently promiscuous, they readily admit that marriage is no longer the barrier against promiscuity that it once was. If the standards of marriage have already been lowered, they ask, why shouldn't homosexuals be admitted to the institution?

“The world of no-strings heterosexual hookups and 50% divorce rates preceded gay marriage,” Andrew Sullivan points out. “All homosexuals are saying ... is that, under the current definition, there's no reason to exclude us. If you want to return straight marriage to the 1950s, go ahead. But until you do, the exclusion of gays is simply an anomaly—and a denial of basic civil equality.”

Feminist Stephanie Coontz echoes the point: “Gays and lesbians simply looked at the revolution heterosexuals had wrought and noticed that, with its new norms, marriage could work for them, too.”

Thus the third inconvenient fact: divorce is a political problem. It is not a private matter, and it does not come from impersonal forces of moral and cultural decay. It is driven by complex and lucrative government machinery

operating in our names and funded by our taxes. It is imposed upon unwilling people, whose children, homes, and property may be confiscated. It generates the social ills that rationalize almost all domestic government spending. And it is promoted ideologically by the same sexual radicals who now champion same-sex marriage. Homosexuals may be correct that heterosexuals destroyed marriage, but the heterosexuals were their fellow sexual ideologues.

Conservatives have completely misunderstood the significance of the divorce revolution. While they lament mass divorce, they refuse to confront its politics. Maggie Gallagher attributes this silence to “political cowardice”: “Opposing gay marriage or gays in the military is for Republicans an easy, juicy, risk-free issue,” she wrote in 1996. “The message [is] that at all costs we should keep divorce off the political agenda.”

No American politician of national stature has seriously challenged unilateral divorce. “Democrats did not want to anger their large constituency among women who saw easy divorce as a hard-won freedom and prerogative,” writes Barbara Dafoe Whitehead. “Republicans did not want to alienate their upscale constituents or their libertarian wing, both of whom tended to favor easy divorce, nor did they want to call attention to the divorces among their own leadership.”

In his famous denunciation of single parenthood, Vice President Dan Quayle was careful to make clear, “I am not talking about a situation where there is a divorce.” A lengthy article in the current *Political Science Quarterly* is devoted to the fact—at which the author expresses astonishment—that self-described “pro-family” Christian groups devote almost no effort to reforming divorce laws.

This failure has seriously undermined the moral credibility of the campaign against same-sex marriage. “People who

won’t censure divorce carry no special weight as defenders of marriage,” writes columnist Froma Harrop. “Moral authority doesn’t come cheap.”

Just as marriage creates fatherhood, so divorce today should be understood as a system for destroying it. It is no accident that divorce court has become largely a method for plundering and criminalizing fathers. With such a regime arrayed against them, men are powerfully incentivized against marrying and starting a family. No amount of scolding by armchair moralists is going to persuade men into marriages that can mean the loss of their children, expropriation, and incarceration.

The fourth point is perhaps the most difficult to grasp: marriage is not entirely a public institution that government may legitimately define and regulate. It certainly serves important public functions. But marriage also creates a sphere of life beyond official control—what Supreme Court Justice Byron White called a “realm of family life which the state cannot enter.” This does not mean that anything can be declared a marriage. On the contrary, it means that marriage creates a singular zone of privacy for one purpose above all: it is the bond within which parents may raise their children without government interference.

Parenthood, after all, is politically unique. It is the one relationship in which people may exercise coercive authority over others. It is the one exception to state’s monopoly of force, which is why government is constantly trying to undermine and invade it. Without parental and especially paternal authority, legitimized by the bonds of marriage, government’s reach is total. This is already evident in those communities where marriage and fathers have disappeared and government has moved in to replace them with welfare, child-support enforcement, public education, and tax-subsidized healthcare.

Marriage is paradoxical in a way that is critical to our political problems—and that causes considerable confusion among conservatives and libertarians. Marriage must be recognized by the state precisely because it creates a sphere of parental authority from which the state must then withdraw. Government today can no longer be counted upon to exercise this restraint voluntarily. We must all constantly demand that it do so. Marriage—lifelong and protected by a legally enforceable contract—gives us the legal authority and the moral high ground from which to resist encroachments by the state.

Prohibitions on homosexual marriage will not save the institution. As Robert Seidenberg writes in the *Washington Times*, “Even if Republicans were to succeed in constitutionally defining marriage as a relationship between a man and a woman, some judge somewhere would soon discover a novel meaning for ‘man’ or ‘woman’ or ‘between’ or ‘relationship’ or any of the other dozen words that might appear in the amendment.”

This is already happening. Britain’s Gender Recognition Act allows transsexuals to falsify their birth certificates retroactively to indicate they were born the gender of their choice. “The practical effect ... will inevitably be same-sex ‘marriage’,” writes Melanie Phillips in the *Daily Mail*. “Marriage as a union between a man and a woman will be destroyed, because ‘man’ and ‘woman’ will no longer mean anything other than whether someone feels like a man or a woman.”

So what is the solution? A measure already before Congress may show the way. Though not intended primarily to save marriage, the proposed Parental Rights Amendment is the first substantial step in the right direction. It protects “the liberty of parents to direct the upbringing and education of their children.” How does this strengthen marriage?

What happens when a government develops a frightening new technology, uses it in what it believes to be a restrained fashion, but then loses control? The National Security Agency and the Pentagon's Cyber Security Command have been working closely with the private Internet security company Symantec to track the progress of the Stuxnet computer worm. Stuxnet was created by the Israeli government in one of its defense forces computer labs to target the Iranian nuclear program. The highly sophisticated virus was developed at great expense, with inbuilt capabilities to amplify its impact and avoid detection that go far beyond what might be developed by anyone lacking government resources.

Stuxnet was designed to attack the operating system of the computers used in the Iranian nuclear facilities at Bushehr and Natanz. The Iranians do not employ the commonly found operating systems developed by Microsoft and Linux, instead having opted for a less conventional system made by the German company Siemens. The Stuxnet worm was developed precisely to attack the Siemens system. Stuxnet first appeared in Iran in 2009 and was intended to operate in stealth, infiltrating the operating system and selecting a target that would inflict maximum damage by disrupting control over the computer's critical infrastructure. The virus can take over the systems that it infects, enabling the attackers to communicate with and control the machines. It is also able to cover its tracks by removing traces that it had ever been present in the system—making it nearly impossible to detect and eliminate. The developers realized what a dangerous weapon they had created, so they built into the program a three-week "propagation window," after which the virus would no longer seek new hosts. They also limited the worm's infectious capacity to three additional computers beyond the first one.

But the first Stuxnet was apparently not deadly enough, so someone in the Israeli government made the decision to create a more virulent version. It appeared in March without the restraints placed on the earlier variant and propagated rapidly. It has spread to the operating systems of more than 60,000 computers in Iran and has done serious damage to a number of government systems. It has also appeared in Europe and worldwide where Siemens software is used, spreading spontaneously. The Iranians are claiming the infection is unstable, morphing into several new forms. Now there is growing evidence that hackers have picked up the virus code and are sharing it. The Israeli government developed a highly sophisticated worm that might prove almost impossible to defeat, and it will now be used by others to make a next-generation virus fully compatible with the major operating systems sold by Microsoft and Linux, with potentially catastrophic global consequences.

In 2009, Israel's head of military intelligence, Maj. Gen. Amos Yadlin, revealed that Tel Aviv was developing a cyberwarfare capability that would enable it to attack and sabotage the computers of hostile countries. Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu confirmed the program earlier this year, describing cyberwarfare—not cyber defense or security—as a national priority. At first heedless of the possible consequences, the Israelis are now learning that once you unleash a devastating new technology, it is impossible to put the genie back into the bottle.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is the executive director of the Council for the National Interest.

Reaffirming the rights of parents—married parents particularly—to raise their own children would weaken government interference in the family. Especially if worded so as to protect the bond between children and their married fathers, such a measure could undermine both the divorce regime and same-sex marriage by establishing marriage as a permanent contract conferring parental rights that must be respected by the state. Within the bonds of marriage, it would preserve the rights of fathers, parents of both sexes, and spouses generally, and it would render same-sex marriage largely pointless. Marriages producing children would be effectively indissoluble, and there would be fewer fatherless children for homosexuals to adopt. Men would come to understand that to have full rights as fathers they must marry before conceiving children, and they would thus have an interest in ensuring the institution's permanence.

This is not a small undertaking. It would mean confronting the radical sexual establishment in its entirety—not only homosexuals but their allies among feminists, bar associations, psychotherapists, social workers, and public schools. It would raise the stakes significantly—or rather it would highlight how high the stakes already are. It would also focus public attention on the interconnectedness of these threats to the family and freedom. It would foster a coalition of parents with a vested personal interest in marriage and parental rights.

The alternative is to continue mouthing platitudes, in which case we will be dismissed as a chorus of scolds and moralizers—and yes, bigots. And we will lose. ■

Stephen Baskerville is associate professor of government at Patrick Henry College and author of Taken Into Custody: The War Against Fathers, Marriage, and the Family.

Four Generations of War

Welcome to On War, a column that will henceforth be a regular feature of this magazine. This is actually the 327th column in the series—the previous 326 will soon

be archived on the *TAC* website. Thus far, On War has critiqued two failed American wars, those in Iraq and Afghanistan. How many more it will have to analyze before military failure combined with financial collapse restores sanity to Washington is anyone's guess.

For the most part, On War looks at conflict through the lens of the Four Generations of Modern War, an intellectual framework I devised in the 1980s. "Generation" is shorthand for a dialectically qualitative shift. As Hegel would remind us, dialectically qualitative changes occur only seldom. We are, however, caught up in one now, which is why the world's most expensive military cannot defeat a bunch of guys dressed in bathrobes and flip-flops and armed with rusty AK-47s and bombs made in the backyard.

Modern warfare began with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, when the state claimed, and subsequently enforced, a monopoly on war. Today's state militaries are virtually all designed to fight other state militaries like themselves; they cannot envision war in any other way. Yet before Westphalia, many different kinds of entities fought wars. Races, religions, tribes, clans, business enterprises—the list is endless.

The First Generation of War ran from Westphalia to about the time of the American Civil War. These wars were mostly about line and column tactics, which is to say the battlefield was orderly. State militaries evolved a culture of order consistent with a battle-

field of order. That culture still defines state armed services today. It is inwardly focused on rules, regulations, drills, and orders; it promotes centralization; it prefers obedience to initiative; and it depends on imposed discipline.

Starting about the middle of the 19th century, the battlefield of order began to break down. In the face of modern firepower and mass armies of men who wanted to fight, the old line and column tactics became suicidal. But the Prussian cultures of state militaries, with one exception, remained cultures of order. Ever since, they have had one foot on the boat and one on the dock, with the winds of change pushing the boat ever outward.

World War I put line and column tactics in hundreds of thousands of graves. By the end of 1914, at least in the West, everyone was in the trenches and the battlefield was empty. But trench warfare was indecisive. The quest for decisive tactics gave birth to both the Second and Third Generations, the Second in the French army and the Third in the German army. They are sometimes also known as attrition and maneuver warfare.

The Second Generation reduced war to methodically putting firepower on targets. Progress was defined as adding ever more firepower. The U.S. military learned Second Generation war from the French during World War I, and that is still how it fights. The Second Generation preserved the First Generation's inwardly focused culture of order.

But on the other side of the trenches, something very different was going on. The Kaiser's army developed Third Generation maneuver warfare to the point where Blitzkrieg was conceptually complete by 1918. It was able to do so because its culture had changed a hundred years before. The Scharnhorst reforms that followed Prussia's defeat by Napoleon in 1806 gave the Prussian army an outwardly focused culture, where the situation, the enemy, and the required result overrode orders, rules, and regulations. Nineteenth-century Prussian army culture was highly decentralized, preferred initiative to obedience, and depended in the officer corps on self-, not imposed, discipline. (That was extended to all ranks after World War I.) Only such a culture made the nonlinear, fluid, time-competitive tactics of maneuver warfare possible.

When the Second and Third Generations clashed head-on in 1940, the Second went down to defeat in weeks. Regrettably, the U.S. military didn't get the point.

Now the Fourth Generation is upon us, while we remain stuck in the Second. In the Fourth Generation, the state loses the monopoly on war it established with Westphalia. Once again nonstate entities are waging war: tribes, races, religions, businesses, gangs, etc. What changes is not how war is fought, but who fights and what they fight for. While state armed services are putting more firepower on more targets, nonstate fighters render themselves untargetable. Almost everywhere, state militaries are losing.

That is the framework of the Four Generations of Modern War, highly compressed. You will be hearing more about it—and not just in these columns. ■

Bleeding Arizona

The state's crackdown on illegals is as much about drugs as immigration.

By Ed Warner

ROB KRENTZ was emblematic of Arizona. He ran a cattle ranch in the southeastern part of the state that had been in his family for four generations. But he was concerned for more than just his herd; he was in the habit of giving food and water to illegal immigrants who came through his land on their way north. They were usually headed for farm work. He was a farmer. Ron was "an old school cowboy with no known enemies and a big heart," writes Paul Rubin in the *Phoenix New Times*.

That was no help to him on the morning of March 27, when he was out with his dog Blue checking conditions in a remote part of the ranch—which also happened to be a familiar trail for drug smugglers coming from Mexico 35 miles away. An unknown assailant shot Krentz several times and killed Blue as well. When police got to the scene, they followed the killer's tracks south toward Mexico until they faded.

Who did it? The murder remains a mystery—and a rarity since most victims of border crime are Hispanics. But the day before his death, Krentz had discovered a quantity of marijuana on his ranch and alerted police. A gang may have sought revenge. Ordinarily, knowing they are probably being watched, ranchers look the other way when they spot contraband on their property. Leave well enough alone.

The killing may have had another connection to the drugs pouring across the border. Perhaps it was a warning to U.S. law enforcement to keep its distance: We are coming, like it or not, and the

profits in our business are more than \$30 billion a year. We mean to keep them. Drugs and immigrants go north to America; cash and weapons come back—a satisfactory transaction for all involved. Good neighbors mean good money.

Little can stop drugs or people from illegally entering the country. The U.S.-Mexico border is 1,969 miles long with only 700 miles under effective control. It was once thought that mountains and barren deserts would prove a formidable barrier to crossings. Think again. Mexicans are so desperate to escape the grinding poverty and vicious crime of their country that they are willing to risk all. They put themselves in the hands of "coyotes," agents of the criminal cartels who know the trails.

Carrying drugs on their back for payment, some migrants fall along the way. They are left to the mercy of the desert and the four-legged variety of coyote. Arizona Governor Jan Brewer was ridiculed in the eastern press for alluding to headless corpses in the desert. The corpses may not be headless, but they're armless and legless, says Gary Thrasher, a farm veterinarian who comes across fragments of bodies as he makes his rounds. On one occasion he was startled by a watch still ticking on a severed arm.

Once they reach their destination, usually Phoenix, migrants coming through Arizona are crammed into some 1,300 drop houses, many now located in comfortable middle class neighborhoods thanks to declining real estate values. There they await their fate. The

cartels may demand ransom; if it's not paid, captives can be tortured or killed. The migrants are sometimes worth more than the drugs they carry, which, after all, can be confiscated. Not the people, many of whom are returned to Mexico and can be brought back again and again for a price. Hungry for profits, the cartels now steal victims from one another, earning Phoenix the nickname "kidnap capital of the country."

As the smuggling increases, so does the corruption of U.S. officials on the border. El Paso special agent Tim Gutierrez explains: "If you're an inspector and you are legitimately waving through 97 out of 100 cars anyway, and you realize you can make as much as your annual salary by letting the 98th go by. It can be easy to rationalize that."

Beyond the border, corruption has reached the American banks that launder money for the cartels. Wachovia, in particular, let \$378 billion in illicit funds slip through its vault, the largest laundering operation uncovered in U.S. history. "Wachovia's blatant disregard for our banking laws gave international cocaine cartels a virtual *carte blanche* to finance their operations," says Jeffrey Sloman, the federal prosecutor who handled the case.

Even so, Wachovia escaped criminal prosecution because that might have caused panic in financial markets—after engaging in criminal activity, some institutions are still too big to fail. Remember this, says bank investigator Martin Woods, when you consider the 22,000 people killed in the Mexico's drug wars.

Wells Fargo has now taken over Wachovia, paid a token fine, and pledges stricter oversight.

What are ordinary Americans to do in the face of Wall Street's complicity and Washington's indifference? Rob Krentz's family issued a statement that they hold "no malice toward the Mexican people for this senseless act, but do hold the political forces in this country and Mexico accountable for what has happened." Other Arizonans had a stronger reaction. There was a rush to gun shops and a surge of support for SB 1070, a bill that provides for a state crackdown on illegal immigrants.

Known as the "Krentz law," it aroused fervent opposition, starting with the White House. For supporters and foes alike, the legislation is more symbol than substance. It largely mirrors federal law already on the books, though it makes detaining illegals somewhat easier for local law enforcement. Yet given their other commitments, police are apt to proceed as usual. Illegal immigration in itself is not their first priority.

In striking down some provisions of 1070, a federal judge noted that immigration is the federal government's responsibility. Then why not exercise it? reply many Arizonans. Testifying to Congress, Larry Dever, sheriff of Cochise County, noted, "While securing our borders is clearly a federal responsibility, we are left with the problems associated by failure to do so." Arizona Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords, a liberal Democrat, says, "what we need are Border Patrol agents on the border, not lawyers in court."

Meanwhile, vulnerable ranchers await the next incident. The *New York Times* offers comforting statistics that show a drop in violent crime in Arizona. But that's for all of the state, reply law enforcers. It's not the case in the south, where much crime—break-ins, car thefts, deaths in the desert—goes unre-

ported. The area is so vast and resources so limited that no statistics are to be trusted. Inhabitants rely on experience and intuition instead.

Enforcing the border is never easy. Immigrants are ingenious about getting across. "Whatever you try to devise, they can get around," says a Border Patrol agent who should know. Fences of all kind, costly to build and maintain, have been erected. Don't rely on them, cautions Wendy Glen, a cattle rancher celebrated for her many community activities, among them working with her husband Warner on the Malpai Borderlands Group, which aims to preserve about a million acres of open space in Arizona and Mexico.

On the Geronimo Trail along the border, Wendy explains the limitations of barriers. "If these intruders face a wall 20 or 30 feet high, they will cut through it or dig under it or get a rope ladder to go over it. A truck with a ramp sometimes serves. These people coming up

cient armored protection. That leaves a no man's land where cartel coyotes can freely venture. But don't call this a borderless "third country," as some do, insists veterinarian Thrasher. "That way, we surrender our sovereignty."

Border Patrol agents pursue their quarry for days, weeks even, using detection methods they call "sign cuttings." They look for footprints in a remote area that may indicate an illegal crossing. Is it recent? Not if insects are hovering over it. A crushed ant hill indicates immigrants may be close because ants quickly rebuild their hills. Despite all the electronic devices spotting movement over the border, people must still catch people, and sign cutting is an acquired skill.

Agents are given three to four months of training and, if not Hispanic, are required to learn Spanish. They take pride in their job because it's protecting the homeland, they say. But their personal safety can be jeopardized. One

THE LEGISLATION IS **MORE SYMBOL THAN SUBSTANCE**. IT LARGLEY MIRRORS FEDERAL LAW **ALREADY ON THE BOOKS**, THOUGH IT MAKES DETAINING ILLEGALS SOMEWHAT **EASIER FOR LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT**.

here don't sit around an office all day. They are athletic. They know what they're doing. That's how they make their living." And what a living. Toting drugs up north to avaricious American consumers can earn them more money in a day than they would otherwise make in a year.

The U.S. Border Patrol has one of the nation's least enviable jobs. There are far from enough agents to control the border, and Robert Cotter, former commissioner of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, says he would keep them away even if plenty were available. It's too dangerous, he says, without suffi-

said he was having dinner at a restaurant near the border when a smuggler came up to the table to say "Hello." A cordial gesture or a not so subtle warning? "They have a vast intelligence," says the agent. "They get to know you."

Arizona Hispanics are deeply involved in the border battle. Alberto Melis, the genial police chief of the town of Douglas, says his city has a 95 percent Hispanic population and 5 percent that lie about it—a good line but not quite the case. OTMs—other than Mexicans—are easy to spot in Douglas. There is racial tension in Arizona, as in every society, but the state's 30 percent Hispanic pop-

ulation is well integrated. Anglos mingle casually with Hispanics and are usually careful to distinguish between the good majority and the minority causing trouble.

Chief Melis says with pride that there is no spillover of violence in Douglas, and I can attest to a very peaceful quiet town where the motorists are so courteous you can almost cross the street without looking. “The bad guys,” says the chief, “go through us, not to us.” And they keep going.

AS IF TO CONCEDE DEFEAT, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS ERECTING SIGNS AT ITS NATIONAL PARKS WARNING PEOPLE AGAINST TRAVELING IN THEM BECAUSE OF THE DANGER FROM ARMED DRUG SMUGGLERS.

But sometimes not too far. At a recent Douglas City Council meeting, residents from the outskirts of town spoke up. They mentioned coming across dead bodies left by coyote guides. Gunfire was frequent outside of town, and one woman said she was luckily someone shooting at her had bad aim. Another woman said she would not go outside without a firearm. There are endless piles of trash in the wake of the migrants. Said William Mercer, “the people crossing over do not know any better, and they die trying to make it to Phoenix.”

Douglas has changed. Emilio Durazo, a retired mining engineer, whose father was naturalized in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II, says in his youth Douglas was an “Ozzie and Harriet” kind of town, open and friendly where everyone knew everyone else. “We would ride our bikes across the border, which was hardly a border.” Just across the border in Agua Prieta, Mavi Valenzuela, wife of a cattle rancher, says much the same thing. She loved the enticing shops and restaurants that lined

Douglas’s main street and she, too, crossed the border. Mexicans and Americans “drank, ate, laughed, cried, fished and hunted together,” recalls American businessman Shields Fair. “We went to each others’ funerals, weddings and parties.”

Not with today’s rampant crime. Murders are routine in Mexico. Last year in Juarez, a major port of entry for contraband, some 2,600 people were killed in the drug wars, and there has been no letup this year. A former Juarez hit man,

now repentant, says his habit was to behead special offenders or saw off their arms or legs. Otherwise, bullets would suffice. Charles Bowden catalogues these atrocities to numbing effect in his recently published *Murder City*. He calls Juarez the most dangerous city in the world, and it’s right across the border from the relatively crime-free city of El Paso, Texas.

Adequate law enforcement is one reason for El Paso’s tranquility. But there is another. While engaged in unceasing violence in Mexico, the cartels do not want to antagonize American customers as they ply their trade. Business is good. Why jeopardize it with unnecessary bloodshed? Today Mexico provides more than half the marijuana consumed in the United States and 90 percent of the cocaine, among other drugs. “It’s as if our neighbor were the biggest drug addict in the world,” complains Mexican President Felipe Calderón. In exchange, Mexicans acquire much of their weaponry from the United States. We help them keep fighting.

We assume that the violence won’t spread here—we’re immune. In his recently published book, *Mexico: Narco-Violence and a Failed State?*, George W. Grayson, professor of government at William & Mary College, takes a contrary view. He writes that “some of the cartels have swarmed across Arizona, which has been called a giant narcotics storage center.” They have divided up turf within the United States, and one of the worst, Los Zetas, has been involved in multiple assaults and murders in Texas. According to the Justice Department’s National Drug Intelligence Center, the cartels now have outlets in 230 American cities where local gangs act as distributors.

As if to concede defeat, the U.S. government is erecting signs at its national parks—some just 30 miles south of Phoenix—warning people against traveling in them because of the danger from armed drug smugglers. Millions of acres of Arizona parkland are off limits to visitors and the Border Patrol but not to the criminals. So whose land is it?

July elections in Mexico were not exactly reassuring. The vote was held down by intimidation, with four corpses dangling from a bridge on election morning in the violent border state of Chihuahua. Some candidates went to the polls in body armor accompanied by guards. There was no clear winner among the various political parties, perpetuating the fragmented government that allows cartels to flourish, says Professor Grayson. “Power flows from the center to the states where governors act like arrogant viceroys who control almost everything except the cartels. With them they arrange a *modus vivendi*.”

That’s also what the Juarez newspaper *El Diario* did when a staff photographer was recently shot, one of more than 30 journalists who have been killed or disappeared in Mexico over the last

four years. "What do you want from us?" a front-page editorial asked the cartels. "What are we expected to publish or not publish so we know what to abide by? You are at this time the de facto authorities in this city because the legal authorities have not been able to keep our colleagues from falling."

Can anything be done before Mexico collapses and the United States suffers the consequences? Some observers point to Colombia, where equally ruthless drug cartels threatened the state. With the aid of U.S. military equipment and training, Colombia's government broke up the major cartels and restored peace—for now. But on the fringes, smaller cartels, harder to apprehend, are sending more drugs than ever to the United States through Mexico. All the fighting has not made an appreciable difference. Eliminate one drug lord and another takes his place. Demand creates inevitable supply.

SMALLER CARTELS ARE SENDING MORE DRUGS THAN EVER. ALL THE FIGHTING HAS NOT MADE AN APPRECIABLE DIFFERENCE. ELIMINATE ONE DRUG LORD AND ANOTHER TAKES HIS PLACE. DEMAND CREATES INEVITABLE SUPPLY.

Some realism is needed in confronting the twin problems of the drug trade and illegal immigration. Many illegals have found useful jobs in America and become part of society. In most respects they are indistinguishable from Hispanics with legal standing. The inevitable crackdown on the border will, of course, affect mainly Latinos. It's essential not to add to tensions and create a shrapp racial divide in America that does not now exist.

For that reason Arizona State University President Michel Crow favors a partial amnesty like the so-called Dream Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors), which would

cover people under 35 who entered the United States before they were 16, who have been in the country for five consecutive years, who have graduated from high school, and have a "good moral character." Under these conditions, they could apply for U.S. residence on the path to citizenship. "There's no point in punishing children for the actions of their parents," says Michele Wucker, Executive Director of the World Policy Institute.

But a more fundamental change in policy may be needed to stop the violence in Mexico. The drug war is already lost, asserts author Charles Bowden. The drugs have won and are more plentiful than ever. Marijuana accounts for more than 60 percent of the cartels' profits. It's also the least harmful of the drugs they trade in—thought to be no worse for the human body than cigarettes or alcohol. If it were legalized with proper regulation and control, like alco-

hol, the cartels would be undermined, perhaps fatally. Legalization could save billions of dollars and tens of thousands lives.

There are currently moves in that direction. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs has decided to allow patients in its hospitals to use marijuana for pain relief in the 14 states where medicinal use of the drug is legal. State initiatives for decriminalization have been proliferating, and more Americans seem to be willing to consider whether ending the drug war would have much the same effect on crime that ending Prohibition had. As the influential economist Milton Friedman wrote: "Illegality

creates obscene profits that finance the murderous tactics of the drug lords; illegality leads to the corruption of law enforcement officials; illegality monopolizes the efforts of honest law forces so that they are starved for resources to fight the crimes of robbery, theft and assault."

If even conservatives must think about such radical proposals, liberals need to recognize that traditional law-enforcement is still necessary—and legislation like the Krentz Law is not racist. The notion of Arizona as a land inhospitable to newcomers could not be more wrong. The *New York Times* reports that in recent years Arizona has accepted more refugees per capita than all but three other states, far more per capita than California or New York. You name it, they come from there: Burma, Sudan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Somalia, Iran. Race and religion don't seem to matter. The welcome mat is out for humanitarian reasons. Says Robert Carey, vice president at the International Rescue Committee, "In the degree of welcome and receptivity we see, I would certainly put Arizona at the top."

For an eastern transplant like myself, there's an openness and camaraderie here that does not sit well with bigotry. There's genuine crime—drug cartels—and Westerners know how to handle that. It comes with the territory. But Mexican crime can be kept separate from Mexicans, who are seriously fighting it and suffering much more from it. Arizonans on both sides of the debate over the Krentz Law recognize this. They are confronting the hard policy choices that have to be made to address the threat of border violence. Sooner or later the rest of the country will have to make some similarly difficult decisions. ■

Ed Warner is a former editor-reporter for the Voice of America.

Fed 2.0

Ben Bernanke launches a New Deal at the central bank.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

BEN BERNANKE doesn't look like a revolutionary. The Federal Reserve chairman has the dry, affectless manner of a timid researcher even as he rings in sweeping changes to monetary policy. He makes his actions seem qualified, tentative, easily revisable. But let there be no mistake: Bernanke is remaking the Fed from a mere central bank into an all-purpose policy tool.

All it took to send the dollar plummeting below parity with its Australian namesake on Oct. 15 was a few bland words from Bernanke, delivered at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. After agreeing that there should be "limitations" on the Fed's "nonconventional" strategy for zero interest rates, and allowing that his critics have "understandable concerns" about inflation, he announced flatly, "there would appear—all else being equal—to be a case for further action."

That set financial pundits squawking—"it's what the market wants!"—and prompted goldbugs to hit "publish" on their "Gold \$2,500?" articles. Fed watchers began to contemplate what it meant for the largest holder of American debt to announce that it will be in the market for even more debt. Bernanke had effectively proclaimed that the emergency measures the central bank employed during the crash of 2008 would now be standard practice. A New Fed was being born.

The old Fed was charged with keeping employment high and prices stable. Traditionally it attempted this by controlling interest rates and through the

"printing press"—the Fed's ability to make loans to member banks through the discount window. But in the 2008 crisis, the Fed moved dramatically to keep home and securities prices up by buying assets directly. What's more, by putting its own purchase price on financial instruments that were rapidly being deemed "worthless" on the market, the Fed helped prop up the value even of securities it did not purchase. The central bank also involved itself deeply in the affairs of nonbanks like the investment house Bear Stearns and insurance giant AIG.

Bernanke admitted that the Fed was tottering into dangerous territory. "One disadvantage of asset purchases relative to conventional monetary policy is that we have much less experience in judging the economic effects of this policy instrument, which makes it challenging to determine the appropriate quantity and pace of purchases and to communicate this policy response to the public," he said.

The New Fed is the offspring of statutory changes dating to the early 1990s and a cultural shift among the central bank's governors and staff. It has new tools, new prerogatives, and a new perspective. In the person of its chairman, Bernanke, the New Fed also has found its personality—experimental, academic, able to seem cautious while improvising wildly, and deathly afraid of deflation.

Bernanke, who taught economics at Stanford and Princeton, made his name for groundbreaking research into the

Great Depression. In part he blamed the extended crisis on a Fed that had "passed into the control of a coterie of aggressive bubble-poppers." He argued that bubbles shouldn't be popped because banks were not just institutions that moved money from savers to borrowers, they were vital to the entire economy in their role as discoverers of market information. Financial institutions were experts in gathering data about industries, and the loss of that data could lead to a vicious downward spiral.

Bernanke laid out his thoughts in the 1983 *American Economic Review*, in which he argued that bank failures meant that households, farms, and small firms found credit "expensive and difficult to obtain" and that the "credit squeeze helped convert the severe but not unprecedented downturn of 1929-1930 into a protracted depression." Even sound businesses could not get access to necessary credit because the infrastructure of knowledge that would have made their worthiness plain had contracted along with the banking sector. The result was a credit crunch more severe than necessary. In public life Bernanke would vow to protect the economy from another wave of bank failures.

By the late 1990s, Bernanke also positioned himself as an aggressive foe of deflation. In a stinging 1999 paper, he lashed out at the Japanese central bank for that country's "self-inflicted" economic torpor. "[The Bank of Japan's] responses, when not confused or

inconsistent have generally relied on various technical or legal objections—objections that, in my opinion, could be overcome if the will to do so existed. Far from being powerless, the BOJ could achieve a great deal if it were willing to abandon its excessive caution and its defensive response to criticism,” he wrote.

In short, the Bank of Japan was not willing to take extraordinary measures beyond settings its effective interest rate at zero. Bernanke urged firing every cannon against deflationary forces, even if new cannons had to be invented with the help of Japan’s government. He sug-

By the time Bernanke found himself at the Fed in the 2000s, America’s central bank had undergone a transformation that set the stage for his experiments. The DNA of long dead New Deal programs had been surreptitiously grafted onto the Fed. This was quite a change, since institutions such as the Reconstruction Finance Corporation and the Federal Housing Administration had been created in the first place only after FDR’s Treasury Secretary Andrew Mellon and various Fed governors made it clear that the central bank of the 1930s should not be involved in securing mortgages or bailing out nonbank entities.

BY THE TIME **BERNANKE FOUND HIMSELF AT THE FED**, AMERICA’S CENTRAL BANK HAD UNDERGONE A TRANSFORMATION ... THE **DNA OF LONG DEAD NEW DEAL PROGRAMS** HAD BEEN SURREPTITIOUSLY GRAFTED ONTO THE FED.

gested setting aggressive inflation targets of 3-4 percent and urged “substantial currency depreciation.” Or, failing adequate debasement of the yen, he recommended a “helicopter drop”—his words—which, if it didn’t kick-start inflation, would at least increase “the real wealth of the population... as they are flooded with gifts of money from the government.”

Bernanke ended his paper by commending “Rooseveltian Resolve,” writing, “Roosevelt’s specific policy actions were, I think, less important than his willingness to be aggressive and to experiment ... Many of his policies did not work as intended, but in the end FDR deserves great credit for having the courage to abandon failed paradigms and to do what needed to be done.” Settled doctrine and legal limits were just “failed paradigms” and technicalities. For Bernanke, the work of escaping economic Depression is a matter of improvisation, trial, and will.

The extension of governmental credit directly to nonbanks has historically been a fiscal operation carried out by the Treasury Department, not a monetary-policy maneuver undertaken by the Fed. Restrictions on the Fed’s loaning power under Section 13.3 of its charter meant that few nonbanks or business could ever qualify for an infusion of cash or easy lending. Fed governors had to vote that “unusual and exigent” circumstances existed. And the collateral offered by borrowers had to consist of “real bills” and certain Treasury obligations “of the kinds and maturities made eligible for discount for member banks under other provisions of [the Federal Reserve] Act.”

These limitations were undone in a little-noticed amendment to the Fed’s lending authority nearly 20 years ago—the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation Improvement Act of 1991 (FDICIA). The law significantly revised the emergency liquidity provisions of the Federal

Reserve Act, including Section 13. In particular, FDICIA permitted all nonbanks to borrow at the discount window for emergency purposes under the same collateral terms afforded to banks.

The key language was inserted by Sen. Christopher Dodd and written by a securities industry attorney, Rodgin Cohen, dubbed by the *New York Times* the “Dean of Wall Street Lawyers.” In the 1980s Cohen was the leading mergers and acquisitions lawyer in the financial industry. He worked for Goldman Sachs and AIG, though he insists he was not acting on their behalf when he drafted the language.

In a speech before the bill was passed, Dodd announced that he wanted to give the Fed power “to respond in instances in which the overall financial system threatens to collapse” as he believed it had in 1987. The language he added to the legislation allowed the central bank to accept anything to its “satisfaction” for collateral. The revision anticipated the very terms used 18 years later to justify these powers. Loans could only be made to “systematically important institutions” that in an emergency couldn’t obtain private credit. Five members of the Federal Reserve Board were required to vote on approving this emergency borrowing.

Potential problems with FDICIA were noted in the Fed itself. Walker Todd, an economist at the Cleveland Fed, submitted a paper to the central bank’s *Economic Review* warning of the dangers ahead. He wrote:

How could a new element of taxpayer risk arise? One possible source is derived from the moral hazard aspects of the increased availability of Reserve Banks’ loans to nonbanks during financial emergencies. Nonbanks lacking eligible collateral or eligible purposes for borrowing must manage their

affairs and conduct their relations with creditors and clients so as to be able to survive financial market emergencies. Now, with increased potential for assistance during emergencies, nonbanks' managers might have less incentive to avoid recourse to the Federal Reserve. Although nonbanks still have strong incentives to run their firms prudently, their managers now have potential access to another funding source during financial crises. Whether this potential access alters nonbanks' business decisions—so as to make their calling upon that funding source more likely—remains to be seen.

In other words, investment firms and insurance companies—nonbanks—might come to see themselves as too big to be allowed to fail.

Todd had to revise and resubmit his paper to the Fed governors 22 times before it was published. "They knew I was right, they just wanted to run me around or prevent the fact from being discussed," he says. Even as Todd's article finally went to press, the Fed Board

The Fed not only acquired new powers in the 1990s, it developed a new intellectual culture as well. The Federal Reserve's traditional mindset was captured in 1973 when Howard Hackley finished revising his monograph, *Lending Functions of the Federal Reserve Banks: A History*. The book is a historical study long on technical and legal analysis of the central bank's lending practices, with extensive examination of the reasons for its powers. Hackley's book was both the product and a guarantor of a central bank mindset steeped in history and restrained by settled doctrine. It was the most cited text in Federal Reserve publications in the decade and a half after its publication.

But now Hackley's influence is almost gone—what remains of the Old Fed mentality is to be found only in soon-to-be retiring Kansas City Fed President Thomas Hoenig or Richmond hardliner Jeffrey Lacker. As for the rest, "They're beyond Hackley now," says Todd.

The younger Fed presidents and staff prefer a central bank that takes its policy cues from advanced mathematical models rather than history. Fed watchers over the last two decades

cies backfire, the urge to innovate will be indulged.

And as with Bernanke himself, fear of deflation has become an obsession at the New Fed. In 2003, after Greenspan had cut interest rates for the 13th time, the central bank continued to worry about how it might combat deflation even as home prices rocketed beyond all reason. That summer, the Dallas Fed published a paper titled "Monetary Policy in a Zero-Interest-Rate Economy," which presented an argument for arresting deflation even after the Fed has slashed interest rates to nothing. The paper proposed, among other things, the possibility of the Fed buying real goods and services. But the most shocking idea it contemplated was a savings tax.

The paper's authors, Evan Koenig and Jim Dolmas, formulated a "stamp fee" or "carry tax" whereby currency would have to be stamped periodically, at a price, "in order to retain its status as legal tender. The stamp fee could be calibrated to generate any negative nominal interest rate the central bank desired." The authors mooted rates of perhaps 1 percent a month. In other words, Fed economists were contemplating penalties for saving money—effectively a government charge of 12 dollars for every 100 dollars you didn't spend in a year.

Bernanke's response to the 2008 crash didn't involve anything quite like that. But he made extensive use of the powers the Fed obtained from FDICIA. And 17 years after drafting the language that empowered the Fed to lend to nonbanks, Roggin Cohen was the very man Bear Stearns CEO Alan Schwartz would call as his investment house reeled. Cohen's recommendation: call the Fed. The central bank not only crossed the Rubicon to save a "systemically important" financial house from extinction, it gave Bear Stearns enough

THE FED NOT ONLY ACQUIRED NEW POWERS IN THE 1990s, IT DEVELOPED **A NEW INTELLECTUAL CULTURE** AS WELL. THE YOUNGER FED PRESIDENTS AND STAFF PREFER A CENTRAL BANK THAT TAKES ITS POLICY CUES FROM **ADVANCED MATHEMATICAL MODELS RATHER THAN HISTORY**.

called again to try to stop publication. He was fired from the Cleveland Fed later that year and eventually became a research fellow and instructor for the American Institute for Economic Research. Todd now calls the 1991 revisions to Section 13 "the greatest abuse of the Federal Reserve's monetary policy powers in recent decades."

have had to familiarize themselves with esoteric systems such as the "New Keynesian" technique of "dynamic stochastic general equilibrium modeling," which passed into and out of fashion within the Fed in just the last decade. The intellectual climate is more technical and adventuresome than before. Even if the New Fed's poli-

life to allow Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson to call Deutsche Bank CEO Josef Ackermann and plead with him to take on the ailing Bear. Bernanke's Fed would go on to order the purchase of undreamed of forests of rotting financial timber, barely pretending to comply with the its own rules about sound investments.

With a second round of asset purchases and quantitative easing to begin after the Fed's November meetings, Bernanke has announced that the New Fed lives on. The old central bankers derived their policies from the data of history—often imperfectly, but almost always with caution. The New Fed tears through constraint and custom, embold-

ened by the latest econometric theories. Whereas Fed Chairman William McChesney Martin warned the Senate in 1957 that "there is no validity whatever in the idea that any inflation, once accepted can be confined to moderate proportion," Bernanke today defines price stability as hitting inflation targets no matter what it takes. And now that the New Fed has grown accustomed to using powers once wielded only by the Treasury, there is little to stand in the way of its chairman's "Rooseveltian resolve." ■

Michael Brendan Dougherty is a TAC contributing editor and a 2009-10 Phillips Journalism Fellow.

Operation Cakewalk

A patriot's plan to invade everywhere

By David Frum

Because some blogs are too good not to print, TAC presents a highlight from David Frum's FrumForum, "The clubhouse for conservatives no longer willing to humor the lunatic fringe," as Salon.com's Joan Walsh insists.

WHY ARE WE conservatives stuck on the fringe? Two words: Tea Party. The rhetoric issuing from these ultras is extreme, anti-government, and frequently—how shall I put it?—*un poco loco*.

You'd think we conservatives had run out of realistic projects to put on the national agenda. The fact is, we have no

shortage of achievable policy goals, and most of them are "shovel-ready."

Like ridding the world of evil, for example. In our 2004 bestseller, *An End to Evil*—available from \$0.05 at Amazon.com—Richard Perle and I laid out a 10-point plan for how America can eradicate evil, terror, and all other forms of malefaction from the planet. Yeah, I know, why hadn't anyone thought of this before?

All we have to do—and by "we," I mean the United States, not my native Canada or any other nation—is levy the largest army since World War II and march it into Tehran to peacefully assist

the Green Movement's student leaders in democratizing Iranian society. What's not to like?

On our way, we—again, not Canadian bloggers but American soldiers—could march through Yemen, Syria, all the Central Asian 'stans (and for the love of Bibi, let's not forget Gaza) leaving democratic institutions and thriving free-market economies in our wake.

Two words: Cake. Walk. We have every reason to believe that Operation Cakewalk would be a smashing success. Because the intelligence is in. In fact, FrumForum's stellar summer intern Benji, undeclared at Georgetown, has made a very convincing PowerPoint presentation on how the U.S. Coast Guard reserves could liberalize Kyrgyzstan's economy—currently a barter system based on sorghum, shell casings, and goat methane—in under 48 hours.

48 hours! The project would pay for itself after three weeks. I see great things ahead for that young man.

What could be more practical, more moderate, than ridding the world of evil with Operation Cakewalk? Of course, some wing-nuts and Paulestinians will have to be dragged on board kicking and screaming. You can't make this stuff up: recently Rand Paul said he would have voted against the Iraq War! You heard me: *against*. The sheer treason of these people makes me ill.

(Just to clarify, by treason I mean treason against the U.S., not Canada.)

Well, there you have it. But until we learn how to set modest, achievable goals again, we conservatives will be stuck with the far-out Republican Party we deserve. Remember, *An End to Evil!* From \$0.05 at Amazon now. ■

—as told to Chase Madar

David Frum is a former speechwriter for President George W. Bush. He blogs at FrumForum.com. Chase Madar is a lawyer in New York.

The Critic as Radical

T.S. Eliot's conservatism sought the still point in the turning world.

By George Scialabba

SIMONE DE BEAUVOIR wrote of the 20th-century conservative thinker: "Gloomy or arrogant, he is the man who says no; his real certainties are all negative. He says no to modernity, no to the future, no to the living action of the world; but he knows that the world will prevail over him." That T.S. Eliot at least partly resembled this portrait he himself acknowledged. As he wrote to a friend in 1921: "Having only contempt for every existing political party, and profound hatred for democracy, I feel the blackest gloom."

In daily life, Eliot was neither gloomy nor arrogant but serene and gracious, generous and humble. At the height of his fame, his courtesy even to the callow and importunate was legendary. Yet however Eliot achieved this extraordinary equableness, he doubtless saw himself as a man whose vocation was to say no, to stand athwart history strenuously wielding negative certainties. Why, exactly, did Eliot loathe modernity and what did he hope to conserve against its advance?

Eliot was a great disparager. In *After Strange Gods*—which remains, notwithstanding the infamous remark about "freethinking Jews," an important statement of Eliot's beliefs—he refers to "the living death of modern material civilization" and declares "Liberalism, Progress, and Modern Civilization" self-evidently contemptible. (That was perhaps an echo of Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors*, which condemned the proposition that "the Roman Pontiff can, and ought to, reconcile himself to, and come

to terms with, progress, liberalism and modern civilization.") Elsewhere in the same vein Eliot deplores "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history" and lays it down that "one can assert with some confidence that our period is one of decline."

He praised Baudelaire, who, in an age of "programmes, platforms, scientific progress, humanitarianism, and revolutions," of "cheerfulness, optimism, and hopefulness," understood that "what really matters is Sin and Redemption" and perceived that "the possibility of damnation is so immense a relief in a world of electoral reform, plebiscites, sex reform, and dress reform ... that damnation itself is an immediate form of salvation—of salvation from the ennui of modern life, because it gives some significance to living."

At the root of this condemnation of modernity lay the conviction of Original Sin. Eliot believed that most people have very little intelligence or character. Without firm guidance from those who have more of both, the majority is bound to reason and behave badly. Eliot made this point frequently: sometimes gently, as in the well-known line from "Burnt Norton": "Humankind cannot bear very much reality." Sometimes harshly, as in "The Function of Criticism," where he derided those in whom democratic reformers place their hopes as a rabble who "ride ten in a compartment to a football match at Swansea, listening to the inner voice, which breathes the eternal message of vanity, fear, and lust."

The obtuseness and unruliness of humanity in the mass meant that order, the prime requisite of social health, could only be secured by subordination to authority, both religious and political. "For the great mass of humanity ... their capacity for *thinking* about the objects of their faith is small"—hence the need for an authoritative church rather than an illusory Inner Voice. Likewise, "in a healthily stratified society, public affairs would be a responsibility not equally borne"—hence the need for a hereditary governing class. Underlying these social hierarchies is a hierarchy of values. "Liberty is good, but more important is order, and the maintenance of order justifies any means."

Order, long preserved, produces tradition—"all the actions, habits, and customs," from the most significant to the most conventional, that "represent the blood kinship of 'the same people living in the same place'." Eliot's best-known discussions of tradition are found in his literary essays: "Tradition and the Individual Talent," "The Metaphysical Poets," and others.

His poetry was, of course, revolutionary as well as conservative, and his criticism explains this apparent paradox. Artistic originality emerges only after a lengthy assimilation of many traditions. The artist surrenders his individuality, and it is returned to him enriched. The tradition too is enriched. "The whole existing order" is "if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is

conformity between the old and the new. ... The past [is] altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past."

A continually modified tradition is not an unchanging magisterium. In politics and religion alike, Eliot's conception of tradition is surprisingly dynamic. Our "danger," he wrote, is "to associate tradition with the immovable; to think of it as something hostile to all change; to aim to return to some previous condition which we imagine as having been capable of preservation in perpetuity." On the contrary, "tradition without intelligence is not worth having." We must "use our minds" to discover "what is the best life for us ... as a particular people in a particular place; what in the past is worth preserving and what should be rejected; and what conditions, within our power to bring about, would foster the society that we desire." This does not sound like Condorcet or Godwin; but neither does it sound much like Burke or de Maistre.

Eliot was too subtle not to recognize—and too honest not to acknowledge—that his more general pronouncements about political philosophy were unsatisfactory. Like all general pronouncements, they reduce to truisms. Continuity is best, except where change is necessary. Much tradition, some innovation. Firm principles, flexibly adapted. When he was asked about his literary-critical method, Eliot replied, "The only method is to be very, very intelligent." It is likewise the only political-critical method.

Concerning two matters of contemporary relevance, Eliot was profoundly, though unsystematically, intelligent. Eliot's political utterances were, for the most part, fragmentary and occasional, occurring in essays, lectures, and the regular "Commentaries" in his great quarterly *The Criterion*. His compliment to Henry James—"he had a mind so fine no idea could violate it"—applied

to Eliot as well, for better and worse. He was never doctrinaire; on the other hand, he was rarely definite. As one commentator observes: "To gesture toward, but not to reveal; to pursue, but not to unravel, this is Eliot's procedure." Yet although he eschewed programs, there is much in his asides.

About economics, he repeatedly professed theoretical incomprehension. But just as often, he professed skepticism that any immutable laws of political economy proved that extremes of wealth and poverty were inevitable or that state action to counter disadvantage must be futile. Disarmingly, he acknowledged:

I am confirmed in my suspicion that conventional economic practice is all wrong, but I can never understand enough to form any opinion as to whether the particular prescription or nostrum proffered is right. I cannot but believe that there are a few simple ideas at bottom, upon which I and the rest of the unlearned are competent to decide according to our several complexions; but I cannot for the life of me ever get to the bottom.

Nevertheless, "about certain very serious facts no one can dissent." For "the present system does not work properly, and more and more are inclined to believe both that it never did and that it never will."

What were some of these "very serious facts"?

... the hypertrophy of Profit into a social ideal, the distinction between the use of natural resources and their exploitation, the advantages unfairly accruing to the trader in contrast to the primary producer, the misdirection of the financial machine, the iniquity of usury, and other features of a commercialized society.

Sometimes he wondered whether Western society was "assembled round anything more permanent than a congeries of banks, insurance companies and industries, and had any beliefs more essential than a belief in compound interest and the maintenance of dividends." On one occasion he sounded almost like a communist: "Certainly there is a sense in which Britain and America are more democratic than [Nazi] Germany; but on the other hand, defenders of the totalitarian system can make out a plausible case for maintaining that what we have is not democracy but financial oligarchy."

Indeed, Eliot was full of surprises on the subject of communism. Try to imagine his dreadfully predictable acolytes at *The New Criterion* saying something like this: "I have ... much sympathy with communists of the type with which I am here concerned [i.e., "those young people who would like to grow up and believe in something"]. I would even say that ... there are only a small number of people living who have achieved the right *not* to be communists."

Eliot did not think much of most anti-communists, "who abhor extreme socialism for motives in which a very little Christianity is blended with a great deal of self-interest and prejudice." For "no one is any more justified in a general condemnation of the principles of the extreme Left than he is in a general condemnation of those of the extreme Right. The principle of Justice affirmed by the intellectuals of the Left is at least analogous to Christian justice."

In fact, Eliot feared and despised unrestrained capitalism. He associated himself with those who "object to the dictatorship of finance and the dictatorship of bureaucracy under whatever political name it is assembled." Capitalism, he wrote, "is imperfectly adapted to every purpose except that of making money; and even for money-making it

does not work very well, for its rewards are neither conducive to social justice nor even proportioned to intellectual ability." It "tends to divide the community into classes based upon differences of wealth and to occasion a sense of injustice among the poorer members of society." During World War II he wrote a friend that he was willing to join a "revolution" whose "enemies" would include not only "popular demagogues and *philosophes*" but also "those who want after this war to revert to money hegemony, commercial rivalry between nations, etc."

Even when deploring the consequences of Original Sin, Eliot could not help acknowledging the social scaffolding of cultural questions. He supported censorship of pornography, though not of "books possessing, or even laying

of the good society went deep. "Stability is obviously necessary," he insisted—indeed it would seem to be the alpha, if not the omega, of any intelligible conservatism. "You are hardly likely to develop tradition, except where the bulk of the population is so well off where it is that it has no incentive or pressure to move about." But without precisely that incentive, the labor market of neoclassical economic theory cannot function. Stable communities or efficient labor markets—one must choose.

Eliot was ready to do so. An Anglican committee report he coauthored in the late 1930s called for the "thorough reconstruction of the present economic and political system." He probably meant this, bromidic as it sounds. A few years earlier he co-signed a letter to the *Times* arguing that there was enough

scope both to the individual—thus securing the utmost variety in human affairs—and to the social whole—thus stimulating the rich, collective activities which would surely come to life in a society free to express its invention, its mechanical skill, its sense of the earth in agriculture and crafts, its sense of play."

This sounds much more like William Morris than like Margaret Thatcher. But beyond these, he offered virtually no details. He was neither a visionary nor an activist but a critic.

I said that Eliot had much to teach us about two matters of contemporary relevance. About the first, distributive justice, he wrote much, directly if not programmatically. About the other, he wrote scarcely a word—not surprisingly, since it was hardly visible on the horizon before his death. I'm referring to the steady erosion of inwardness—Eliot would have said "spiritual depth"—resulting from the omnipresence of commercial messages (the "nightmare" of "advertisement") and electronic media.

I have no doubt that Eliot would have reacted strongly and negatively to this development, so discordant with his sensibility and practice. As described in his critical essays, the gradual surrender of the artist's personality to tradition, which is at the same time the mastery and transformation of the tradition, resembles the attitude of the narrator of the *Four Quartets* toward Being and history. In both cases, the prescribed motions of the spirit are inward and downward, the virtues prescribed are humility, gravity, receptiveness. The refrain of "Burnt Norton" has become a meme: "the still point of the turning world."

This capacity—as a valiant minority of contemporary critics keeps insisting—is what advertising and the cyberworld are, with fearful rapidity, extin-

THE INCOMPATIBILITY BETWEEN UNTRAMMELED CAPITALISM AND ELIOT'S CONCEPTION OF THE GOOD SOCIETY WENT DEEP ... STABLE COMMUNITIES OR EFFICIENT LABOR MARKETS—ONE MUST CHOOSE.

claim to, literary merit." But, he went on, "what is more insidious than any censorship is the steady influence which operates silently in any mass society organized for profit, for the depression of standards of art and culture."

He was no feminist and posed these scandalously sexist rhetorical questions: "Might one suggest that the kitchen, the children, and the church could be considered to have a claim upon the attention of married women? Or that no normal married woman would prefer to be a wage-earner if she could help it?" But at least he remembered to add: "What is miserable is a system that makes the dual wage necessary."

The incompatibility between untrammelled capitalism and Eliot's conception

wealth in the world "to give every individual a certainty of adequate provision," but that "there appears to be lacking some machinery of distribution" to accomplish this.

What kind of "system" did Eliot want? A Christian society, of course—his critique of capitalism strikingly parallels that of *Rerum Novarum*, *Centesimus Annus*, and other papal encyclicals. But like those venerable documents, Eliot's writings, though they could be pointedly negative, were not vividly affirmative. He thought there should be a lot more people living on the land. He thought people should have to spend fewer hours working for a living. He enthusiastically endorsed this description of the goal: a "new type of society, which would give fullest

guishing. It simply cannot withstand the immediacy, volume, and near instantaneous succession of stimuli to which all of us are incessantly subjected. The spirit has its rhythm and metabolism; it cannot survive in just any environment. Or, if you prefer: the brain is plastic and may be drastically reshaped. Our world is flat, as we have been loudly told. Will the same processes that flattened it also flatten our souls?

The most moving passage I have encountered in all of Eliot's writings occurs in a letter to his friend Paul Elmer More:

To me, religion has brought at least the perception of something above morals, and therefore extremely terrifying; it has brought me not happiness, but the sense of something above happiness and therefore more terrifying than ordinary pain and misery; the very dark night and the desert. To me, the phrase 'to be damned for the glory of God' is sense and not paradox; I had far rather walk, as I do, in daily terror of eternity, than feel that this was only a children's game in which all the contestants would get equally worthless prizes in the end. ... And I don't know whether this is to be labeled 'Classicism' or 'Romanticism'; I only think that I have hold of the tip of the tail of something quite real, more real than morals, or than sweetness and light and culture.

This revelation has not been vouchsafed to me, but I can recognize here a description of something supremely valuable. I would fight, as I believe Eliot would, to preserve the conditions of its possibility against the encroachment of the electronic hive. ■

George Scialabba is the author of What Are Intellectuals Good For?

— OLD AND RIGHT —

The military strength of Rome derived from the complete subordination of the army to civil authority, but this does not occur merely by saying it shall be so. An army is a diversion of energy from the productive life of a nation. In the Roman republic, control of the army was ensured by local control of conscription. The soldiers' reward for winning a campaign was to go home. Their loyalty to the commander was restricted to military orders given under the Senate's commission. The commander on active service was subject to direct instructions from the Senate, which were enforceable because the army was likewise dependent on the Senate for supplies. If a commander was superseded, his soldiers would obey the Senate; they were a citizen army. A commander had very little chance of sitting tight and establishing an independent regime in a foreign region.

The permanent acquisition of conquered provinces changed the whole set-up. The armies were enormously increased by mercenaries and dubious allies. Expenses had to be met from tribute. Vast wealth was at the disposal of a victorious general in a distant province; and if their pay was in arrears the soldiers looked immediately to their commander. There were also chances for big deals by civilians with political connections and no scruples. It was a tempting gamble for a Roman financier to back a general with personal loans to be recouped by favor. Caesar owed millions before he gained preferment. The Senate was divided by factional interest.

The army of the Republic operated spatially as a lateral instrument of the civil authority, an extensor swung from a universal joint. The extensor weakened as it lengthened, while the load it clutched was much greater. When the several armies occupied the provinces, the weights at the outer ends, which could neither be dropped nor managed, dragged them from the socket, and then impelled them against the center like gigantic battering rams. The "arm of the law" was unequal to the reach and retractive action demanded by such an unprecedented spread of its field.

What had happened was that the primary direction of the current of energy was reversed, and with it the incidence of physical power. The republic was formed by a community that produced its own livelihood, including the personnel and maintenance of the army; the energy originated within the state. It could meet extraordinary demands in war because the normal expenses of the state were moderate; and the agencies of direct authority were so arranged as to provide the most economical pick-up. When a state relies upon a citizen army for defense, the intrinsic difficulty is to find a way to connect and disconnect the individual for intermittent military duty at minimum expense and with the least dislocation of the civil economy. That problem was fairly well solved by the republic, with a centrifugal mechanism as the source of energy required. It could not operate in reverse.

In the republic, [Romans] had been capable craftsmen and good farmers, disposed to thrift, else they would never have developed their keen sense of property; but from the beginning of empire, the ratio of production to population diminished in Rome, while unemployment increased and became chronic. And in the imperial set-up, Rome was strictly a consumer of material goods.

—Isabel Paterson, *The God of the Machine*, 1943

What I Saw in Afghanistan

A decade of nation-building has not made Kabul—or America—any safer.

By Doug Bandow

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN—Barbed wire is sold by the mile here. No building of any consequence sits unprotected, open to the public. Most insecure of all, as measured by the amount of so-called security barriers deployed around them, are U.S. and European bases and embassies. You can't even see the American Embassy from the street. Entire city blocks are consumed by allied facilities.

This is after nine years of nation-building. Banks, hotels, and NGO offices also are mini-fortresses. The Serena is a high-walled, well-guarded luxury hotel where many Westerners stay. Unfortunately, not too long ago the Taliban staged a raid there with fighters dressed as Afghan police. They made for the gym and killed several Westerners.

My colleagues and I instead stayed at a low-key British lodge, which was hidden behind two walls. Our driver knew where to turn before being waved through the unmarked gate where our vehicle was checked for bombs.

Roads are strewn with metal barriers, concrete blocks, sandbagged positions, and machine-gun topped trucks and Humvees. Some side streets are entirely closed to locals. Traveling even a short distance can take an hour or more. Kabul is a collection of small islands rather than a unified city.

Armed men are everywhere: Allied troops. Afghan National Police. Private guards. None of this may come as a surprise in a city at war. But this is the capital of a country where the U.S. has been fighting longer than it did in Vietnam or World Wars I and II. The city is more dangerous than when our troops first arrived.

This land is an almost continuous anomaly. It has a reputation as the "Graveyard of Empires," but only the Afghanistan of the 19th century and latter 20th century warranted that label. Prior to the "Great Game" between Britain and Russia, empires routinely conquered the country. Most conflict came from foreign invaders rather than domestic insurgents.

And for most of the 20th century, Afghanistan was at peace. Its monarchy wasn't particularly liberal, but there was little instability—until a 1973 coup sparked nearly four decades of war.

About the only surviving symbol of that era is Darul-Aman, the old royal palace, now a fire-ravaged shell. We took in the site. A couple of weeks afterwards a Taliban suicide-bomber hit a NATO convoy on the same road, slaughtering allied troops and Afghan civilians alike.

With its variegated ethnic make-up, Afghanistan looks like a country on the verge of collapse. The Taliban is dominated by ethnic Pashtuns, while Tajiks, Uzbeks, and other groups made up the Northern Alliance, which took the lead in ousting the Taliban in 2001 with American support. Yet despite the demographic fault lines, there's little obvious sentiment for secession even in distant and safer cities, such as Herat and Mazar-e Sharif. Afghan nationhood looks surprisingly robust.

What most Afghans crave is federalism. The monarchy survived by ruling only lightly outside of Kabul. But Hamid Karzai wants to do much more.

Afghans and Western expatriates agree that if there was a moment when nation-building had a chance, it was in

2002 and 2003, when the Bush administration was instead planning for Iraq.

George W. Bush succeeded in ousting the Taliban on the cheap. But his administration ignored Pakistani support for the Pashtun-dominated Taliban even as Islamabad sacrificed the foreign "Arab" fighters. Washington never sent sufficient U.S. troops, preferring to rely on corrupt warlords to round up Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. And the Pentagon soon began shifting intelligence assets and other forces to Iraq.

Meanwhile, we seemed to work overtime to make enemies. An American consultant who served in the embassy after the Taliban's ouster told me of being visited by frustrated village elders seeking the release of people arrested by American forces based on secret intelligence. The problem worsened as the Karzai government expanded its authority. Villagers knew whom to go to in a decentralized tribal society to resolve disputes. Venality was not unknown among local elders, but decisions were predictable and swift.

No longer.

Even more counterproductive have been the Afghan security forces. The Afghan National Police (ANP) is charged with keeping order, but its professional capabilities consistently earn negative reviews. Worse, when you send in the ANP, one Afghan told me, "you make Taliban." In some areas the police have set up unofficial checkpoints where they strip travelers of money and cell phones.

The Afghan National Army (ANA) is touted as more professional. But one Afghan told me that the most important reason the ANA is viewed more favorably

than the ANP is that soldiers are stationed away from the population. They simply can't do as much harm as the police.

It's easy to blame the security forces. But a fish rots from its head, and so it goes in Afghanistan. Praise for the Karzai government is scarce from anyone not on the official payroll. Afghans and foreigners point to corruption, electoral fraud, and pervasive incompetence.

Not every minister is equally culpable, and at the grassroots some Afghans risk their lives to promote economic development. But Hamid Karzai has become the symbol of everything wrong, head of the "political mafia," as one Afghan put it, while his brothers run the drug and economic mafias. A foreign associate whose friendship with Karzai goes back many years responded carefully when I asked him about such allegations: no Afghan politician, he said, could survive without taking care of his family and friends.

Privately, few U.S. or NATO officials disagree with such assessments. Some even admit that Western aid has turned Kabul into a vampire city. They say that Karzai is the best we can do. Alas, that slogan isn't particularly effective at convincing Afghans to die for their country.

In fact, there is no shortage of Afghans who want to create a liberal society in the best sense of the word. Some are sophisticated and Westernized; others are simply decent people trying to survive in an indecent environment. Tribal and ethnic backgrounds mean much less in cities, and even most traditionalists are cultural conservatives not violent jihadists. The vast majority of Afghans want peace and a better life. But outsiders can't give them either one.

The future doesn't look good. The Karzai government, like so many Western-backed regimes in other embattled societies, survives only at the sufferance of the allies. Yet allied plans suffer from having been developed in a policy

vacuum. Western personnel have little contact with Afghans beyond the political class in Kabul or the people they see as servants—drivers, interpreters, cooks. In Kabul top military and diplomatic officials travel in armed convoys between each other's fortified compounds.

Nevertheless, some Western military officials believe the new anti-insurgency strategy is working. The abundant Western consultants who fill Kabul's backdoor speakeasies make the same argument. They say that aid coordination and implementation are better. Allied soldiers win any firefight and are able to clear and hold territory. The foundation is being laid for a new governing structure.

Maybe, but operations have not gone as well as expected in Marja and have been delayed in Kandahar. Some of the optimistic consultants I encountered had been temporarily recalled from the latter because of rising violence—so much for their projections.

The more basic problem is the lack of the "government in a box" that is supposed to be dropped into territories liberated by U.S. and allied militaries. Counterinsurgency doctrine presumes a capable local partner. So long as the Karzai regime cannot provide competent governance, Afghans will continue to take up arms against it.

Indeed, a consistent theme from Afghans and even some Americans here is that there are "good" Taliban and "bad" Taliban. A portion of the movement, and especially the leadership, is fighting for power and is backed by its own set of outsiders, both Pakistanis and "Arabs" (such as al-Qaeda). They win few friends and rule by fear.

But many Taliban foot soldiers are more likely to enlist to expel the outsiders seeking to rule. They dislike Hamid Karzai as much as Barack Obama. Even Afghans opposed to Taliban rule view these as "good" Taliban open to compromise.

One U.S. consultant argued that we should look at allied operations from an Afghan perspective. What if outsiders showed up in America and arrested local residents based on undisclosed intelligence and shipped some of them to prisons thousands of miles away? What if these invaders replaced American leaders, changed American traditions, and revolutionized American mores? Finally, what if the foreigners imposed a new government, most notable for its venality, incompetence, and obsequiousness?

Maybe with enough time, the U.S. and its allies could suppress the insurgents and foster local governance in Afghanistan. But Washington doesn't have much time. For good reason, the American people are unlikely to support another decade of war in Central Asia. What could possibly justify the cost?

Not terrorism. Although U.S. forces did not kill or capture Osama bin Laden, they did oust the terrorist group from Afghanistan and substantially degrade its capabilities. Today what remains of al-Qaeda is more active in Pakistan. Terrorists can find plenty of other potential host territories, including Yemen and Sudan. Who rules Kabul, or other parts of Afghanistan, doesn't much matter for confronting the problem of terrorism.

Attempting to create an effective central government in Kabul offers no other serious security benefit. Leaving would be ugly—it would be painted as an American defeat. But then, sticking around and leaving later would be worse. Liberal Afghans would face a bleak future on their own: we should let our friends come to the U.S. if they wish. But staying is not worth years more of warfare, thousands more dead Americans, and hundreds of billions more wasted dollars. Nine years in Afghanistan is long enough. It's time to bring our troops home. ■

Doug Bandow is a Senior Fellow at the Cato Institute.

Extraordinary Joe

Joseph Sobran had a golden pen and the common touch.

By Kevin Lynch

THE *NEW YORK TIMES* obituary of Joe Sobran (1946-2010) described him as “one of the conservative whiz kids” who came to *National Review* at the invitation of William Buckley. There were indeed others, with Garry Wills and David Brooks being perhaps the best known. But those whiz kids were different from Joe. For them, *NR* was a stepping stone to other things. For Joe, *NR* was home, and he intended to stay.

He came to New York City and *NR* in 1972, by way of Ypsilanti, Michigan, and this ever loyal son of the Midwest never gave a sense of being awed by place or company. Why should he be? He came armed. He knew his Burke, his Chesterton, his Dr. Johnson, not to mention his beloved Shakespeare—on whom he had lectured at Eastern Michigan University—and was always ready to fire off a quote from any of them. His timing was exquisite. He would, at the perfectly appropriate moment, offer the perfectly apt quote to illuminate the moral or political point under discussion. I preceded Joe by three years at *NR*, and editorial sessions in the pre-Sobran days were far from somber affairs, especially when Bill Buckley was presiding. But with Joe on board they frequently became hilarious. He would come up with a quip or quote that would cause the room to erupt, and Buckley’s laughter was invariably the heartiest. No one could have made a smoother transition to life at the magazine.

What was true in person was equally true in print. From the beginning, his writing adorned every part of the maga-

zine. Those who laughed at one of the unsigned items in the editorial section were likely laughing at a Joe Sobran paragraph. In the first issue of after Reagan’s victory in 1980, Joe proclaimed: “With the election of Ronald Reagan, *National Review* assumes a new importance in American life. We become, as it were, an establishment organ; and we feel it only appropriate to alter our demeanor accordingly. This is therefore the last issue in which we shall indulge in levity. Connoisseurs of humor will have to get their yuks elsewhere. We have a nation to run.” Connoisseurs and yuks in the same sentence—that was typical Sobran.

His first major article was a cover story on Garry Wills, one of the earlier whiz kids. But this kid had undergone a transformation—from Right to Left, and indeed New Left—and that intrigued Joe, partly because Wills still described himself as a conservative even though

about anything—from the wrongs of abortion and the perfidies of liberalism to the joys of baseball—and everything he wrote connected with readers. Brilliant as he was, and I think he was a genius, he somehow came across as an average Joe. The only difference was that, unlike every other Joe, he had a gift for saying what the ordinary conservative was thinking—or, more exactly, a gift for saying what was just on the tip of his tongue—and could say it as beautifully as Burke, Chesterton, or Johnson. Yet in many ways he was very different from his admirers. He preferred, he said, “a literary, contemplative conservatism to the activist sort that was preoccupied with immediate political issues.” Still, he connected.

No wonder. Look how he led off one of my all-time Sobran favorites, “The Republic of Baseball,” which appeared in *NR* toward the end of his time there:

BRILLIANT AS HE WAS, HE SOMEHOW CAME ACROSS AS AN AVERAGE JOE. BUT HE HAD A GIFT FOR SAYING WHAT THE ORDINARY CONSERVATIVE WAS THINKING.

he now was more kindly disposed to the Black Panthers than to the Republican Party. In six elegant and devastating pages, Joe analyzed Wills’s “elopement with the Zeitgeist”; by the end of the piece, when Wills is pinned and wriggling on the wall, the reader almost feels pity for him.

I don’t know whether Wills had a following during his time with *NR*, but Joe quickly earned one. He could write

“Ted Williams began his autobiography by saying that when he was a kid, his only ambition was to have people say, as he walked down the street, ‘There goes the greatest hitter who ever lived.’ My own autobiography would start the same way. It would end differently, though.”

Anyone who reads that opening and doesn’t finish the article—a fine example on its own of literary, contemplative

conservatism—deserves a reward. I used to think most of our covers were slightly amateurish, but the one for this issue was sublime. It featured a beaming Joe Sobran dressed in a genuine Yankees uniform and leaning on a baseball bat in the way sluggers used to do. The smile on his face could have lit up Yankee Stadium—and his pot belly was definitely Ruthian.

After Bill Buckley, it was Joe who got most of the fan mail. And if you discount the readers who mistakenly assumed that anything without a byline was done by Buckley, I bet the two would have been neck and neck. To me, what was most remarkable about Joe's popularity was that it never got to his head. Though he had left the Midwest, he retained a Midwestern modesty. Sure, he had his gifts, he seemed to think, but the people he met had theirs too. No other staffer was on as good terms with the folks at the nearby delicatessen or newsstand. Of course, the proprietor of the newsstand had good reason to like Joe, as he usually purchased every newspaper and magazine—excluding the trash—he had. Much as he deplored the liberal media, he always took the *Times*, *New Yorker*, *New Republic*, and *New York Review of Books*, as well as *Sports Illustrated*.

In the office he was even more generous with his friendship. I wish I had kept count over the years of the people who told me they would be forever grateful to Joe for introducing them to C.S. Lewis or G.K. Chesterton. And he didn't just recommend. He would give them a copy of the particular book that provided the perfect introduction to Lewis (*The Abolition of Man*) or Chesterton (it varied, sometimes *Orthodoxy* or *Everlasting Man*, other times *The Well and the Shallows*).

Wonderful writer, friend, and colleague that he was, Joe did have his faults. Neatness was not, to him, a

virtue, as anyone who visited his office or his house would pick up right away. So deeply rooted was his conservatism that he never threw anything away, including newspapers and McDonald's wrappers. He would lose checks and other unimportant things in the chaos, but he could always find the book he needed. I am not letting out a secret when I say Joe had his problems with the Internal Revenue Service. But he wasn't making a political point by not paying his taxes. He just never got around to it. Besides, even if he wanted to pay them, he would never be able to find all the necessary paperwork. I have

I AM NOT LETTING OUT A SECRET WHEN I SAY JOE HAD HIS PROBLEMS WITH THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE. BUT HE WASN'T MAKING A POLITICAL POINT BY NOT PAYING HIS TAXES. HE JUST NEVER GOT AROUND TO IT.

long thought that, since Joe's lifestyle was completely tax deductible—practically all his money went to buy books and magazines—if he had kept his receipts and filed his taxes the IRS would have had to send him a big check every year.

Having left *NR* in 1985, I wasn't around when the fireworks began that led to the end of his career with the magazine in 1993. His writings on Israel and its U.S. supporters have been hashed over so many times that there is no need to go into great detail here. Throughout his career, Joe talked and wrote candidly about anything he wanted. But when he brought up Israel and the extraordinary influence it has on American politics, he was told to change the subject. Someone who had roamed so freely couldn't do that. He knew this wasn't a good career move, but neither were the many pieces he wrote against abortion. And sooner or later Joe and *NR* would have parted

ways with or without Israel. The magazine was becoming neoconservative, heartily backing U.S. policies to spread democracy around the world, while Joe was vehemently against military interventionism. His hero Chesterton loved England but never supported the British Empire. Joe loved America; he just didn't want to see its outposts everywhere.

The end of his time at *NR* was far from the end of his career. He continued his column and started, with the help of his good friend Fran Griffin, *Sobran's*, a monthly newsletter of his essays and columns. As was true of any Sobran pro-

duction, it was rich in content and beautiful in style. It lasted until 2007, when his health began to fail. The final years were difficult, as his condition steadily deteriorated and his money ran out. But some things never changed. He still had many, many friends and the love of his four children. And he still loved to tell jokes, a great deal of which came with him from Michigan. Most of all, the young man who had read himself into the Catholic Church, converting in his late teens, was, after a period of drift, firmly back in its arms, and that gave him great joy.

According to Hilaire Belloc, another Sobran favorite, "There is nothing worth the wear of winning, but laughter and the love of friends." By that standard, Joe was a big winner, easily as big as Ted Williams. ■

Kevin Lynch, a former articles editor of National Review, lives in Arlington, Virginia.

Conscience of a Movement

Fifty years ago, conservative publishing was born.

By Sean Scallon

GO TO ANY CHAIN BOOKSTORE and scan the political or current affairs section. On shelves will no doubt be Mark Levin's bestseller *Liberty and Tyranny* and Sean Hannity's latest, *Conservative Victory*. Perhaps Dick Morris's *2010: Take Back America* will be there alongside Ann Coulter's *Guilty*. Glenn Beck's recent novel, *The Overton Window*, may well be stocked in the front of the store.

That these titles are bestsellers and given prominent space in stores is testament to the enormous market that exists for books written—or at least bylined—by right-wing celebrities who already command considerable audiences as radio talkers, politicians, syndicated columnists, or television pundits. It's easy to translate an audience from one medium into another.

But long before Fox News or coast-to-coast talk radio, there was a book that built its own market—a market that became the conservative movement. Fifty years ago a ghostwritten work credited to a little-known U.S. senator revolutionized publishing. It had none of the advantages that authors on the Right enjoy today, yet it still sold over a million copies, largely because its words persuaded people who had never thought of calling themselves “conservatives” to buy it. Barry Goldwater's *Conscience of a Conservative* created a mass audience for conservative thought where none had existed before. Nothing like it could be written today.

The manuscript for *Conscience* was not submitted to a traditional publishing house. Conservative activist Clarence

Manion had conceived of the book as a “booklet on Americanism” to propel Goldwater to the Republican nomination in 1960. He commissioned *National Review* senior editor L. Brent Bozell to write it, and set up a dummy corporation, Victor Publishing, to distribute it. The book itself was printed by a trade publisher in the small town of Shepherdsville, Kentucky—Publisher's Printing, Inc.

Manion initially hoped to sell copies in bulk to businesses and conservative groups like the John Birch Society. But for Publisher's Printing to recoup its costs, *Conscience* needed to sell at least 50,000 copies, which meant it had to get into bookstores. Thus, everything depended on the book finding an audience that would buy it. This had to be something more than a campaign pamphlet.

Brent Bozell had spent the early summer of 1959 in Spain, deepening an appreciation for its restored Catholic Bourbon monarchy. Yet as he drafted *Conscience* throughout the rest of the year—with Goldwater giving his approval after looking through the manuscript in January 1960—he did not compose a reactionary tract celebrating the “good old days” of Clarence Budington Kelland's “Mark Tidd” novels. He wrote of a conservatism that assailed conformity, shook the liberal status quo, and championed individual freedom and liberty. Conservatives had never sounded quite like this before.

The book won Goldwater and his ideas a new kind of reader, as Rick Perlstein relates in *Before the Storm*:

Think of a college bookstore, perhaps at one of the new universities in California, its sprawling, bland, concrete campus as big as a medium-sized town. Imagine a pimply college freshman wandering in. He is wearied from his first soul-crushing run-in with Big Bureaucracy, after complying with the procedures for securing his place in next semester's classes. After purchasing the closely printed required texts for the major he had just been compelled to declare, his eyes alight upon the red, white, and blue cover of *Conscience of a Conservative*.

...He opens the book and, standing, reads fourteen short pages inviting him to join an idealistic struggle to defend the individual against the encroachment of the mass. ... The student buys the book. Freedom, autonomy, authenticity: he has rarely read a writer who speaks so clearly about the things he worries about, who was so cavalier about authority, so *idealistic*.

In those college bookstores, *Conscience* sold like hot dogs at the ballgame. Despite distribution problems that taxed the resources of Victor Publishing, by June 1960 *Conscience* was on the bestseller lists of *Time* and the *New York Times*. Half a million copies were in print by the time of the November election. *Conscience* succeeded not just because it reshaped the language of conservatism but also because it fit the

mood of the buying public. Other books of the period glorifying the lone individual against systematized conformity were also big sellers: William H. Whyte's *The Organization Man*, David Riesman's *The Lonely Crowd*, Paul Goodman's *Growing-Up Absurd*, C. Wright Mills's *The Power Elite*, not to mention the works of Rand, Camus, and Sartre. This was also the heyday of the beatniks, of *Howl!* and Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*.

Conscience was written in an atmosphere of social and ideological rebellion against the systems and machines that seemingly threatened to crush the individual. There had been earlier well-written and well-received books by conservative writers such as Whittaker Chambers, Russell Kirk, William F. Buckley Jr., and Richard Weaver. But while such works sold well and established conservatives' intellectual credentials, none had such fast mass-market appeal.

The broad audience *Conscience* found helped the Draft Goldwater Committee grow beyond the supporters Perlestein calls "craggy old Midwestern foundry men." At the South Carolina Republican Convention in March 1960, delegates with advanced copies of Goldwater's book helped the Arizona senator win the state's delegation to the national convention. Republican conventions in Mississippi, Arizona, and Louisiana likewise went for *Conscience*'s author. Hundreds of Goldwater Clubs popped up across the country. Their members descended on Chicago in late July for the Republican National Convention, handing out copies of *Conscience* to every delegate they could buttonhole and slipping books under hotel-room doors. Even though Goldwater didn't come close to winning his party's presidential nomination that year, the attention he received kick-started his 1964 campaign.

If conservatives have an easier time

bringing a book to market in 2010 than Victor Publishing did in 1960, writers of all kinds have a much harder time garnering attention for ideas as fresh as those in *Conscience* were when it was published. The conservative authors of today score bestseller after bestseller because of who they are rather than because what they say is important. No one outside of dedicated conservative circles—much smaller then—bought *Conscience* simply because U.S. Senator Barry Goldwater was the author (Only one percent of Republicans polled nationwide thought he should be the party's nominee in 1960.) *Conscience* sold because it made interesting arguments to readers who were willing to consider them—and perhaps be won over by them.

But books are not sold to individual readers any more, they are sold to specific markets. They are promoted and packaged into niches, demographically designed to maximize unit sales. While

people want to buy jalapeno-and-oyster flavored ice cream, then companies will sell it to them ... Despite what intellectuals will often claim, most people (including me) don't really want their assumptions challenged most of the time (e.g., the most intense readers of automobile ads are people who have just bought the advertised car, because they want to validate their already-made decision). I get that people often want comfort food when they read.

If that's the direction in which publishing—and conservative publishing in particular—is headed, then there's no point to being as bold as Bozell was in writing *Conscience*. Why risk sales from a locked-in audience just waiting buy the next product off the assembly line?

The Conscience of a Conservative celebrated the spirit of the individual against both the liberal bureaucratic

CONSCIENCE OF A CONSERVATIVE SOLD BECAUSE IT MADE INTERESTING ARGUMENTS TO READERS WHO WERE WILLING TO CONSIDER THEM—AND PERHAPS BE WON OVER BY THEM.

this may be a good business model—or maybe not, considering the state of the trade—it doesn't lend itself to books that take risks and can potentially create new audiences the way *Conscience* did.

Readers and authors, no less than publishers, have grown more conservative in the worst sense of the word—they don't want to be challenged. *National Review* writer Jim Manzi suggests how this contributes to the success of dubious works like Mark Levin's *Liberty and Tyranny*:

One view is that a book is just another consumer product, and if

state and communist totalitarianism. Fifty years later what we have in the field of conservative writing is celebration of the mass bloc. Movement authors are forever writing the same books to the same people willing to buy them. American automakers once sold vehicles this way, until a changing market forced them into bankruptcy and bailouts. Conservative publishing may be heading toward the same destination much more quickly. ■

Sean Scallon is a freelance journalist and author of Beating the Powers that Be. He lives in Arkansaw, Wisconsin.

Glenn Beck's Revisionism

How the Fox News pundit distorts the Progressive legacy.

By Paul Gottfried

WHEN GLENN BECK wants to look serious he dons oversized horn-rimmed glasses and begins to lecture about Progressivism. In his telling, Progressives have contributed significantly to our latter-day political problems. He finds their ideology—combining massive bureaucracy with a command economy and certain forms of social engineering identified with eugenics—at the heart of today's big-government liberalism. His litany of real or alleged Progressives includes Woodrow Wilson, John Dewey, Franklin Roosevelt, and occasionally Franklin's cousin Teddy. Early feminist and birth-control advocate Margaret Sanger also sometimes appears among this unsavory group.

Beck could list many more. Self-described Progressives included President Wilson's son-in-law and secretary of the Treasury, William McAdoo; the Wisconsin antiwar senator Robert La Follette; California governor and long-time senator (from 1917 to 1945) Hiram Johnson; Idaho senator William Borah; historian Charles Beard; sociologist Harry Elmer Barnes; and Republican president Herbert Hoover. In fact, there were so many prominent Progressives in the early 20th century that Beck would have to devote several of his talkathons to the topic to give us some idea of the broad range of personalities and positions within the movement.

The radio host's history is not altogether wrong. Originally identified with the reform wings of both national parties before World War I, Progressivism attracted many luminaries such as

Theodore Roosevelt, Hoover, and Wilson. Those who adhered to this vaguely defined tendency typically favored the expansion of public administration as an alternative to party patronage, periodic use of referenda for determining the popular will, and public education as a source of national solidarity. Progressives generally preferred a highly centralized government run by professional bureaucrats, and they naïvely believed that the methods of the hard sciences could be applied to governing.

Indeed, Progressives thought that government should be the "science of administration." This was an idea that Woodrow Wilson promoted as a professor and president at Princeton, as governor of the Garden State, and finally as the 28th president of the United States. Scientific administration demanded some significant changes in political practice. Progressive judges like Louis Brandeis and those who came after him used the courts to increase the powers of organized labor and extend federal authority at the expense of the states. Hiram Johnson, as California governor from 1911-1917, worked to expand the civil service; he also favored women's suffrage because he hoped the fair sex would rally to his notion of an impartial public administration.

Certainly there are features of Progressivism that anyone concerned about centralized power has every right to criticize. But there are problems with how Beck frames his critique. There were different types of Progressives who

stressed diverse themes, not all of which can be subsumed under the rubric of "big government." The connection between Progressivism and modern liberalism is weak. And in truth, Fox News personalities like Beck support many federal programs vastly more intrusive than any the Progressives dared contemplate.

There are many several sides to Progressivism that Beck fails to acknowledge. Progressives like Robert La Follette were more interested in popular referenda than they were in centralized public administration. Others like Senator Borah came out of a rural populist tradition and never overcame their distrust of the national government. Although McAdoo designed the Federal Reserve System at Wilson's behest, he was a zealous hard-money man and fought to maintain the gold standard until it was abolished under Franklin Roosevelt. McAdoo was at most an unwitting agent for bringing about inflated paper money.

In foreign policy there was an unbridgeable divide in the Progressive camp between liberal internationalists and isolationists. Most of the opposition that FDR encountered to Lend-Lease and other policies leading to America's entry into World War II came from his fellow Progressives in both parties. Antiwar Republicans in 1917 and again in 1939-1941 included Progressives such as La Follette, Borah, and FDR's neighbor in upstate New York, Hamilton Fish. Hiram Johnson not only opposed American entry into both European wars but

had the distinction of being the only U.S. Senator to vote against America's joining the League of Nations and the United Nations. Although a self-described "Lincoln-TR Republican," Johnson protested entangling foreign alliances and carrying an overly big stick into the international arena.

Pro-war Progressives came to be known as liberal internationalists and are the ancestors of today's neoconservatives, not a few of whom have taken to calling themselves "Hard Wilsonians." Some of the original internationalists broke ranks, however. Though a pro-war Progressive in 1917 and lifelong admirer of President Wilson, Herbert Hoover changed his foreign policy stance in the 1930s and became a critic

In Central Europe, Progressives' notions about consulting the people in critical political decisions became their primary legacy. Interwar European jurists, including many on the Right, appealed to the idea of holding frequent referenda as an alternative to party-run politics. Conservative authoritarian leaders in the Baltic States admired and quoted American Progressives not as socialists but as nationalist populists.

In the postwar U.S., meanwhile, liberals such as historian Richard Hofstadter went after some Progressives for what was seen as their right-wing suspicion of administered democracy. Hofstadter attributed this populist streak to an atavistic dislike for rational control from the top, and he saw this as a blemish on

rats alike went after the votes of the group that the Progressives had championed, public-sector employees, and the Progressives ultimately ended up reinforcing our two-party duopoly.

Progressivism's influence has not been limited to one side of the political spectrum. Among isolationists on the Right, Beard and Barnes were heroes for their attacks on FDR as a warmonger. Yet both of those critics of liberal internationalism came from the left wing of the Progressive movement, and Beard alternated his invectives against Roosevelt with calls for a redistributionist government. The antiwar Republican Hamilton Fish, whom FDR would rail against in public addresses, was a social liberal in the interwar years. Fish had commanded a black brigade in the Great War, and he thereafter became an advocate of civil rights as well as a fierce opponent of liberal internationalism. It's a mistake to ascribe to all Progressives Woodrow Wilson's views on racial differences or his Anglophile attitude in foreign policy.

There is some truth in Beck's caricatures. As social historians Carl Degler and Pat Shipmann have demonstrated, many Progressive reformers were indeed attracted to eugenics. Plans to sterilize the mentally deficient and to discourage those deemed unfit to reproduce were not foreign to the Progressives' design for public administration. And McAdoo, who was as much a segregationist as his father-in-law, gladly accepted the endorsement of the Ku Klux Klan when he ran unsuccessfully for California governor in 1924.

But none of this links Progressivism to latter-day liberalism, as Beck professes. Surely today's Democrats are not calling for measures to ensure racial hygiene; nor are they enlisting Klan support to get elected. If anything, they are morbidly anxious to confer government favors on supposedly vic-

CONTRARY TO THE IMPRESSION CONVEYED BY FOX NEWS, PROGRESSIVISM HAD EFFECTS IN MORE THAN ONE IDEOLOGICAL DIRECTION. BY TODAY'S STANDARDS IT MIGHT SEEM QUITE CONSERVATIVE AND WAS CERTAINLY PRO-FAMILY.

of American military involvement in Europe. Nevertheless, even as president, Hoover considered himself to stand firmly in the Progressive tradition of strong public administration.

Contrary to the impression conveyed by Fox News, Progressivism had effects in more than one ideological direction. By today's standards its cultural orientation might seem quite conservative and was certainly pro-family. Even left-wing Progressives like Eleanor Roosevelt and Frances Perkins would have emphatically opposed anti-discrimination legislation aimed at encouraging women to enter the workforce. Progressives in the interwar years favored government support for a single-family wage, one that would allow men to provide for their families "in dignity" while wives stayed home and tended to their children.

the their left-wing credentials.

Progressive commitments to centralized administration and to popular referenda at the state level obviously pulled in opposite directions. The apparent contradiction is explained by the fact that, like the Populists of the late 19th century, Progressives were above all against governments being run by parties and machine politicians. Expert public administrators and popular referenda were both means of circumventing the corruption and deal-making associated with party politics.

California's Governor Johnson supported a law to let voters register in more than one party. Its obvious purpose was to weaken the solidarity and power of the national parties. But the parties proved adaptable: they harnessed Progressivism by claiming to represent it. Republicans and Democ-

timized minorities. Indeed Democrats discriminate against the majority in order to please those considered disadvantaged.

It also seems absurd to equate liberal support for abortion with the eugenic policies of Margaret Sanger. Today's abortion advocates are in favor of killing fetuses of all pigmentations and ethnicities, as long as doing so allows women

for Fox pundits somehow only the Democrats stand on the slippery slope leading to political-moral damnation. Not until Democrats had taken over the executive branch did Beck and company notice the fascist and Progressive genealogy of the federal government. Presumably those authoritarian influences were nowhere in sight as long as the GOP was riding high.

THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE WAS **MANY TIMES WORSE IN 1932 THAN IT IS NOW.**
AND WITH FEW EXCEPTIONS, PEOPLE IN THE 1930s DEPENDED ON **SINGLE-BREADWINNER INCOMES**, AND THE AVERAGE FAMILY OF FOUR HAD FAR LOWER EARNINGS THAN TODAY, **EVEN TAKING INFLATION INTO ACCOUNT.**

to express their autonomy. Abortion rights are not about eugenic notions of racial hygiene but about a late modern, feminist interpretation of individual liberty.

Borrowing from his frequent guest Jonah Goldberg's ideas about "liberal fascism," Beck frequently attempts to identify Progressives and modern liberals with the likes of Hitler and Mussolini. Because fascists and Obamaites have both favored social programs, and because the Nazis were genocidal murderers, we are free to denounce Obama and his party as racist fanatics. The syllogism is simple: big government means fascism, fascism means the murder of minorities. He who grants the premises must concede the rest of the argument, despite the dubious connections being drawn.

Fallacies abound here. Lots of governments have advocated extensive social programs—indeed, programs far more extensive than those undertaken by most fascist regimes—without coming to resemble the Third Reich. In America, Republicans as well as Democrats have voted for welfare statism. Yet

Beck and other Fox critics of the Progressives may be far more addicted to big government than those they demonize. Tears glaze their eyes when they talk about 1960s civil rights laws, which placed entire regions of the country that once discriminated against black voters under what is now perpetual federal surveillance. Beck rages against the late Sen. Robert Byrd for voting against the Civil Rights Act. Byrd believed this legislation would interfere excessively in commercial relations and plunge the country into endless suits and investigations over racial and gender discrimination. The senator may or may not have been right in this judgment. It is far from clear, however, that someone who zealously embraces such governmental interference long after the end of segregation has any right to accuse Progressives of being in favor of the "nanny state." Although this indignation may be Beck's attempt to woo minorities, it makes one wonder how serious he is about scaling back public administration.

Beck maintains that Americans stand at a crossroads between freedom and

statism, much like the watershed of 1932—but this time we'll do right and get rid of the welfare state. In promoting this idea, he is either mendacious or delusional. Americans will not be voting on the New Deal this year or in 2012 but on whether or not to expand Obama's programs. A certain historical perspective may be needed here: FDR had a truly pressing reason for bold action, even if his policies were largely misconceived and had long-range harmful effects. The unemployment rate was many times worse in 1932 than it is now. And with few exceptions, people in the 1930s depended on single-breadwinner incomes, and the average family of four had far lower earnings than today, even taking inflation into account. Our present dependence on government is not the desperate behavior of impoverished people. It's a habit instilled by the ideologies of both parties—by security statists and national-greatness conservatives no less than by the old Left.

The Progressives prepared the first tiny steps on a long journey that has resulted in a much bigger government than most of those early 20th-century figures planned to give us. The talk radio and television pundits who now inveigh against Progressivism have fully accepted the increased government that those they revile helped to create. And these faux conservatives celebrate the additions to it that came long after the Progressive era, amid the civil rights and sexual upheavals of the 1960s and 1970s. Our plight today has less to do with Progressives who lived a century ago than with the pabulum dispensers on our televisions every night. ■

Paul Gottfried is Raffensperger Professor of Humanities at Elizabethtown College and author of Encounters: My Life with Nixon, Marcuse, and Other Friends and Teachers, among other works.

Arts & Letters

BOOKS

Liberty's Laureate

By Kelly Jane Torrance

THE LITERARY WORLD'S immediate reaction to the news that Mario Vargas Llosa was the winner of the 2010 Nobel Prize in Literature was a surprise. It wasn't just that the Peruvian novelist's name wasn't among those bandied about in the weeks before the award was announced in October. (Stars such as American novelists Philip Roth and Joyce Carol Oates and Syrian poet Adonis, as well as little-known figures such as South Korean poet Ko Un and Algerian novelist Assia Djebar, made up the likely shortlist.) It was that Vargas Llosa is—*quelle horreur!*—a classical liberal.

Not to worry. The Nobel committee hasn't ended its practice of handing out literature's most prestigious prize only to current or former communists. The 74-year-old Vargas Llosa made the journey so many intellectuals did over the course of the 20th century, from Left to Right. (It rarely seemed to go the other way.) He immersed himself in Marxism as a student, belonged to a communist cell, and supported Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba, seeing in it embers of hope for all Latin America. What changed his mind was observing how outspoken artists get treated in a dictatorship. Castro's regime jailed the poet

Heberto Padilla for a month in 1970, in what became known as the Padilla Affair. Socialism and political freedom, Vargas Llosa finally realized, couldn't co-exist.

The Swedish elite were, perhaps predictably, incensed by the Academy's choice. That Vargas Llosa once held and then rejected the ideals they hold dear added insult to injury. (How Swedes, best known these days for giving us naughty thriller writer Stieg Larsson, became the world's literary arbiters is a testament to the very power of money the Swedes so disdain.) As Johan Norberg reported in *Spiked*, Sweden's largest newspaper, *Aftonbladet*, published not one but three attacks on Vargas Llosa the day after his Nobel was announced.

Writers closer to home didn't know what to think. Marie Arana, writing in the *Washington Post*, whose standalone book section she used to edit, said, somewhat defensively, that he was "undeniably talented," as if there were those who denied it. She celebrated her fellow Peruvian but seemed confused by his beliefs, writing, "For years, the gossip was that Stockholm would never recognize him because his politics were conservative, though many of his positions—on gay rights, for example—have been to the left of center."

The politically aware know that one can be in favor of freedom in both the economic and the social realms. Vargas Llosa proudly proclaims himself a liberal, in the meaning of the term that has been lost in much of the English-speaking world. Some in the Swedish press tried to tar him as an authoritarian in a conservative mold,

but the novelist has emphatically condemned dictatorships of all ideologies. He and Hugo Chavez challenged each other to televised debates in Venezuela last year, but the dictator finally backed down. Pinochet doesn't get a pass because he brought economic success to his country, Vargas Llosa insisted in a 2005 speech in which he declared the Chilean "a murderer and a thief." "No free economy functions without an independent, efficient justice system and no reforms are successful if they are implemented without control and the criticism that only democracy permits."

The Nobel Prize in Literature has always been almost as political as the Peace Prize. Orhan Pamuk wasn't the bookies' choice when he won his Nobel in 2006, but his selection shouldn't have come as a surprise. (And didn't to this writer, who is still kicking herself over the great deal of money she could have won.) The year before, criminal charges had been filed against Pamuk in his native Turkey after he referred to the Armenian genocide. Vargas Llosa and his former friend and now fellow Nobel laureate Gabriel Garcia Marquez—they famously fell out after Vargas Llosa punched him, referring obliquely to some slight against his wife—were two of the eight writers who signed a statement in support of Pamuk. The Turkish novelist made his comments purposely to provoke; Turkey passed a new law just to charge him. He won the Nobel not just for novels of culture clash such as *My Name Is Red* and *The White Castle*, but for his courageous stance for free expression in Turkey, which put his own freedom at risk.

And why shouldn't the Nobel be partly political? Critics complained, as they've done in years past and years since, that Pamuk's selection was a political, not a literary, statement. But the will of Alfred Nobel, that inventor of dynamite whose name has become synonymous with the highest literary pedigree, declares that one part of the money set aside for the awards should be given "to the person who shall have produced in the field of literature the most outstanding work of an idealistic tendency." Has Philip Roth, with his little tales of misogyny, created works of idealism?

Vargas Llosa himself wouldn't want his art to be considered entirely separate from his politics or vice versa. He said as much when he appeared in Washington five and a half years ago, looking as elegantly handsome as ever, to accept the Irving Kristol Award from the American Enterprise Institute. He was pleased to receive the award not just for his novels, and not just for his political activism, but for both. AEI, he noted, "views me as a unified being, the man who writes and thinks."

This man who writes and thinks has published some of the best political novels of South America—or any other continent. He's a versatile writer, one who can write sexy comedies like the autobiographical *Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*—made into a film starring, implausibly, a young Keanu Reeves as the writer who courts his aunt—mystery-thrillers such as *Who Killed Palomero Molero?*, and deep historical novels like *The War of the End of the World*, about a real 19th-century messianic cult in the wilderness that holds off the army for months. He's one of the few modern male authors who can write convincingly about women—and writes as if he cares about them. His biggest accomplishments are his works that combine his two selves, the artist and the politician. The Nobel jury recognized this when they cited him "for his cartography of structures of power and his trenchant images of the individual's resistance, revolt, and defeat."

"Defeat" seems a bit much. The heroine of his masterpiece, *The Feast of the Goat*, is victimized, terrorized, raped—as so many other Dominicans were—by the military dictator Rafael Trujillo. But though she's broken, she's never buried. She returns to the Dominican Republic as a middle-aged woman, decades after she left because of some unspeakable horror in 1961. The book tells the events of that year in parallel, as the avaricious Trujillo runs his bloody dictatorship unaware that conspirators are plotting his death.

Anyone who wants to know how a dictatorship survives—and sometimes thrives—would do well to read *The Feast of the Goat*. The novel is Dickensian in its range and in how difficult it sometimes is to keep the plotters apart. It's about every ugly aspect of human nature, and some of its redeeming qualities, too. There's a staggering amount of detail about how arbitrary rule works. Vargas Llosa, here and in *Conversation in the Cathedral*, has imagined everything. We are presented with the result: horror on the page that echoes horror in the cities of Latin America. There's no avoiding the truth—as so many of Vargas Llosa's fellow intellectuals wished to do when confronted with the evils of the socialist dictatorships they supported. Ayn Rand never wrote a book that so powerfully demolished the pretensions of the state against the individual.

As evidenced by the subjects of his novels, Vargas Llosa wasn't only interested in his own country. But this man of the world, who spends much of the year in London and Spain, did make a spectacularly unsuccessful run for the presidency of Peru in 1990, losing to the then-unknown Alberto Fujimori. He was no mere dabbler in politics. In his autobiography, *A Fish in the Water*, he compares Peru unfavorably with Singapore, quoting specific figures on growth rates of its gross domestic product and exports, and talks of his informative tour through Asia. He still writes a biweekly newspaper column for Spain's *El País*, a newspaper also distributed in Latin America.

His electoral loss was a blow to the Peruvian economy, but a boon to world literature. Vargas Llosa, though, unlike so many of his fellow politicians and fellow novelists, understands that his work in each field feeds the other. As Plato did centuries before, Vargas Llosa's dictators understand the dangerous power of art. Trujillo is constantly mentioning the names of writers for or against the regime. He ordered one who criticized him killed, while he has a poet write some of the speeches that inspire his personality cult.

Vargas Llosa's key insight is that you can't have freedom without a culture to sustain it. In his AEI speech, a stirring tribute to both, he said that liberals "have sometimes generated more damage to the cause of freedom than did the Marxists," for they shared the idea that economics is "the basis of civilization." The free market is the best instrument we have for creating prosperity, but men and women need more than bread and wine to live. "Ideas and culture are what differentiate civilization from barbarism, not the economy," he declared. "The economy by itself, without the support of ideas and culture, may produce optimal results on paper, but it does not give purpose to the lives of people; it does not offer individuals reasons to resist adversity and stand united with compassion or allow them to live in an environment permeated in humanity." Culture, this agnostic insisted, "gives warmth and life to democracy."

Such sentiments seem distinctly unlibertarian, even if Vargas Llosa might be for the free market and against the drug way. Like many of the best artists, perhaps he's ultimately unclassifiable in the impoverished terms of contemporary political debate. Nevertheless, in an era in which Right and Left alike try to push the state deeper into the lives of its citizens—surreptitiously or otherwise—Mario Vargas Llosa could be the perfect Nobel laureate. ■

Kelly Jane Torrance writes from Washington, D.C.

[*The Essential Santayana: Selected Writings*, Martin A. Coleman, ed., Indiana University Press, 704 pages]

Understanding Santayana

By James Matthew Wilson

WHEN RUSSELL KIRK published the first edition of *The Conservative Mind* in 1953, he traced an intellectual genealogy beginning with Edmund Burke and concluding not, as would subsequent editions, with Robert Nisbet, Robert Frost, and T.S. Eliot, but with the New Humanists Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More and the skeptical “aesthetic Catholic” George Santayana. As Santayana himself observed in *The Genteel Tradition at Bay* (1931), Babbitt and More represented an imperfect synthesis of decayed New England Calvinism and absolutist Christian Platonism.

In contrast, Santayana was a philosophical materialist and a skeptic who eschewed as anthropomorphic any suggestion that the order of the cosmos might assign a special role to the human person. “After the theistic humanism of Babbitt and More,” Kirk wrote, “the materialism of Santayana may seem a weakening of the conservative fibre.” But he concluded that “surely the civilization which possessed a Santayana retains some chance of regeneration.” Why Kirk should have played Santayana as the final conservative note, rather than the Platonist and Anglo-Catholic More, is a question worth answering. We might also ask why Santayana—whose aphorisms once tripped from the lips of the well-studied no matter their political convictions, but whose reputation in recent decades has fallen into an abyss—should merit a resurrection now.

Santayana was born in Madrid in 1863, the only child of his mother Josephina’s second marriage. To honor

the wishes of her late American husband, Josephina relocated with the children to Boston soon after, and George was educated at the Boston Latin School and Harvard University, whose philosophy faculty he eventually joined. Santayana never identified himself entirely with America or Spain and wrote his myriad books of ontology, aesthetic theory, cultural and literary criticism, poetry, and memoir from a perspective at once incisive and detached. An itinerant cosmopolitan intellectually and in fact, he thought of the English language as a mere “medium” of convenience, in which he sought “to say plausibly ... as many un-English things as possible.” Well ensconced in the Puritan society of Boston—he coined the term “genteel tradition”—he scrutinized American society from a perspective imbued with Catholic sympathies but without Catholic convictions. His sensibility and unbelief were alike an inheritance from his parents. He recalled that although

I learned my prayers and catechism by rote, as was then inevitable in Spain, I knew that my parents regarded all religion as a work of human imagination: and I agreed, and still agree, with them there. But this carried an implication in their minds against which every instinct in me rebelled, namely that the works of human imagination are bad. No, said I to myself even as a boy: they are good, they alone are good; and the rest—the whole real world—is ashes in the mouth.

Santayana refused ashes in the mouth, a symbol of the utilitarian spirit of “Big Business,” just as he would famously close his mouth to the Eucharist on his deathbed in Rome in 1952. Neither wholly of one nation nor wholly outside the spirit of Catholicism, he attained an intimate knowledge of society in the increasingly Americanized world and a clear imagi-

native position from which to judge it. This explains what Kirk most admired: the consummate anti-liberal critique of modernity tied to a firm defense of the interior life of self-discipline, reason, and imagination that Kirk believed to be the hallmark of conservatism. Blessed with perhaps the finest prose style of his generation—in comparison with which the writings of Babbitt and More seem the braying of serviceable pack mules—Santayana became the inevitable, latest incarnation of the conservative mind, in part despite, in part because of, his philosophical materialism.

He did not stint from explaining his beliefs or demonstrating how they depended upon one another. Even so, we owe a great debt of gratitude to Martin A. Coleman and his long-toiling compatriots in the Santayana Edition for organizing in this one outsized volume a nearly comprehensive anthology of Santayana’s writings. For the first time, one can survey the range and encounter the organic coherence of the philosopher’s thought—all of which unfolds, as Santayana insisted it should, like a work of art, an entirely personal but thoroughly argued intellectual self-portrait.

The foundation of his thought lies in materialism and “animal faith.” For Santayana, as the pre-Socratic philosophers had contended, the universe constitutes a single, continuous, and mechanical flux of matter. The human mind has no direct apprehension of this flux, for all life “is a dream” mediated by symbols or essences, but it cannot doubt the existential reality of the flux, either. We all have an “animal faith” in material reality—we could hardly act without it—and so Santayana’s materialism consists not in denying the reality of anything but matter, but in affirming matter as the only indubitable object of our belief. “Life itself,” he observes, “exists only by a modicum of organization, achieved and transmitted through a world of change,” as if the constant and chaotic tumbling of an infinite sea

of matter were occasionally to form eddies that allow life to spring forth.

Life arises on the foundation of matter, and from life emerges reason and spirit. Following a year spent studying Plato and Aristotle at Cambridge, Santayana began work on *The Life of Reason*, in whose five volumes he argued that happiness consists in just this way of living: “a spiritual life not at all at war with animal interests, [but] which it presupposes,” harmonizing, sublimating, and transcending the foundation of material impulses to create something that goes beyond them. Reason, by giving us the capacity for memory, reflection, and judgment,

makes such refinement possible, and because reason is what makes us human, in such refinement alone must lie human happiness.

A life of the mind is the “result” of man’s material nature, just as a work of art may be the work of his material action; as such, the “Life of Reason, being the sphere of all human art, is man’s imitation of divinity.” Santayana pointedly identifies reason, morality, and aesthetics: all have a natural basis, all constitute an artistic labor of discipline and development, and all yearn toward an end that, being immaterial, must be understood as strictly ideal. In brief, Santayana largely affirms the account of human life Plato and Aristotle give us: man is a rational animal whose happiness consists in the contemplation of a truth that infinitely transcends him. Beyond this,

no rendering of the Life of Reason has ever been carried. ... In Aristotle the conception of human nature is perfectly sound; everything ideal has a natural basis and everything natural an ideal development. His ethics, when thoroughly digested and weighed, especially when the meagre outlines are filled in with Plato’s more discursive expositions, will seem therefore entirely final. The Life of Reason finds there its classic expression.

Coleman wisely begins his selections on the life of reason with one of Santayana’s most eloquent early essays, “The Elements and Function of Poetry,” wherein he affirms the Platonic vision of human life as an ascent within the flux of matter toward the eternal ideal. This account of morality and the good life remains valid for Santayana even though, unlike the ancients, he denies the mind and its products any causal power. Aristotle and Plato erred, he argues, in thinking that the rational and spiritual purpose of human life served as a kind of cause of the universe, the reason for which the world exists. For the Greeks,

human reason has a metaphysical foundation and its end—*telos*, the final cause—consists in contemplating the supreme reality of the Good or Being Itself. For Santayana, the mind emerges from the mechanisms of matter and rises toward an end that is exclusively ideal. So while reason and the mind do not serve as a cause of anything, because they’re not physical phenomena at all, they still provide the purpose for which we live. We yearn like a Renaissance poet after the vision of a beautiful woman, a symbol of Beauty Itself, whose perfection isn’t diminished by being only a dream wrought in the imagination.

Santayana wished to do in the modern world what he believed Aristotle could have done, but did not, in the ancient: separate the moral from the metaphysical. He thought Aristotle should have limited the idea of the moral and happy life of reason to the realm of ethics and politics and accepted the account of the classical materialists and atomists—Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Democritus—in physics. Thus reason was the means to freedom, to a life of play and dream that was no less compelling a vision of human happiness for not being a metaphysical cause or having a material existence.

In our own day, what often scandalizes critics of philosophical materialism is its brazen incoherence. First, the materialist tells us that what we understand as “self” or “soul” is an epiphenomenon of matter and, as such, unreal. We are asked to accept that the terms of our experience are illusions. But no sooner have we been convinced that reality is other and less than it appears, than we are told that it is the discoveries and progress of modern science that awaken us to this truth. But if thought is unreal, then the notions of “knowledge,” “progress,” and “discovery” must be as well. What poses as the triumph of reason turns out to be another convenient myth of Whig history. We are asked only to cease believing in our ideas, while the naturalist’s superstition of

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE® (All Periodicals Publications Except Requester Publications)			
1. Publication Title	2. Publication Number	3. Filing Date	4. Issue Date
The American Conservative	1 5 4 0 9 6 6 X	09/30/10	
5. Issue Frequency	6. Number of Issues Published Annually	7. Annual Subscription Price	
Monthly	12	\$49.97	
8. Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication (Not printer) (Street, city, county, state, and ZIP+4®)		9. Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher (Not printer)	
4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613		4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613	
10. Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)		11. Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)	
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613		Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613	
12. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
13. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
14. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
15. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
16. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
17. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
18. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
19. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
20. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
21. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
22. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
23. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
24. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
25. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
26. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
27. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
28. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
29. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
30. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
31. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
32. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
33. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
34. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
35. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
36. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
37. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
38. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
39. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
40. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
41. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
42. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
43. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
44. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
45. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
46. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
47. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
48. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
49. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
50. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
51. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
52. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
53. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
54. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
55. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
56. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
57. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
58. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
59. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
60. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
61. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
62. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
63. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
64. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
65. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
66. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
67. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
68. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
69. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
70. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
71. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
72. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
73. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
74. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
75. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
76. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
77. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
78. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
79. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
80. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
81. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
82. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
83. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
84. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
85. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
86. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
87. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
88. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
89. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
90. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
91. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
92. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
93. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
94. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
95. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
96. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
97. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
98. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
99. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			
100. Complete Mailing Address of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor (Do not leave blank)			
Daniel McCarthy, 4040 Fairfax Drive, Suite 140, Arlington, VA 22203-1613			

progress gets to masquerade as the unvarnished truth.

Santayana avoids these pitfalls. He denies the idea of progress: whatever we see achieved is evanescent within the infinite flux of matter. Thus his account of civilization is more chaste and coherent than was, say, Darwin's. Understanding mind and spirit epiphenomena, according to Santayana, does not undermine their reality. It marks them off as the triumph of living matter. Further, Santayana sees modern positivism as merely confirming the insights of the pre-Socratic materialists. Classical perception, rather than supposedly earth-shaking modern science, disillusioned him with the anthropomorphic metaphysics of Christian Platonism. Modernity may at last have caught up with the ancients.

Looking about him at the vibrant skyscrapers and industrious humming of American life, Santayana could not help but admire its powers. But in the pragmatism of William James and John Dewey, and the sensual romanticism of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Walt Whitman, he saw this power errantly projected from the material world onto the interior life, blotting out the "classical" life of ideals in favor of a fetish for impulse and experience. This he judged "barbarism," and its propensity to praise the fleeting and novel at the expense of the realm of essence that was the sole aliment of reason became the object of his most memorable and biting criticisms—passage after passage in his autobiographical writings and in his bestselling 1935 novel *The Last Puritan*.

The force of such pages, no doubt, is what impressed Russell Kirk, but they are largely absent from Coleman's selection. Indeed, while Kirk paints Santayana as a severe critic of American moral materialism and aspirations to world domination through economic imperialism, Coleman includes only those passages from Santayana's political and critical writings that would hint at a sympathy for "America as Leader," as the one state that could exercise

global political authority and allow the regime of democratic liberty to flourish.

The reason for this selective emphasis is not far to find. Coleman attempts to justify the republication of Santayana as offering a world sundered by religious violence a voice of "idealism without superstition." Santayana becomes the magus of soft belief, of reason without absolutism, and of American power without a dogmatic nationalism. Our age has already witnessed the failure of more conventional forms of these doctrines—in the waning of mainline Protestantism and the graying of liberal Catholicism, not to mention the mendaciousness and destructiveness of the "Judeo-Christian" imperial agenda of neoconservatism. It is thus hard to credit such an apologia for Santayana as compelling.

Coleman seems to conceive Santayana as a halfway house for once pious Americans on the road to a greedy and listless materialism. Kirk, on the other hand, held the philosopher aloft as a different sort of halfway house: as one important stage of intellectual recovery from the progressivist liberalism of the previous two centuries, a turn toward the faith of Christendom, the right reasoning of the classical intellectual heritage, and the reverence for custom Edmund Burke identified as the foundation and vouchsafe of English liberty.

Kirk would eventually find the halfway house surpassed in the figure of T.S. Eliot, Santayana's student at Harvard and whose works are among the finest expressions of the life of art, reason, and faith in the last century. It is thus as a brilliant transitional figure that Santayana merits our attention. His searing but sympathetic critique of American culture from a modulated Catholic perspective, one that says man lives most fully through his reason, yearning after a spiritual happiness, still has much to teach us. ■

James Matthew Wilson teaches in Villanova University's Department of Humanities.

[*Proud to Be Right: Voices of the Next Conservative Generation*, Jonah Goldberg, ed., Harper, 272 pages]

Right Future

By Daniel J. Flynn

THE 22 INTELLIGENT young essayists from "the dumbest generation" who contributed to *Proud to Be Right* might require translation for the older reader, especially when one remembers previous conservative rallying cries such as "Who Promoted Peress?" and "Don't Immanentize the Eschaton." A time-travelling '50s-era right-winger would feel lost reading essays on gay conservatism and the cult of self-esteem. And could even the chain-smoking antistatist Ayn Rand have envisioned the need for a defense of smoking against governmental encroachment? The issues have evolved, and thus so has conservatism. We're not called "reactionaries" for nothing.

For anyone present at the creation of movement conservatism, James Poulos's broadside against "professional conservatives" would probably be the most startling entry in *Proud to Be Right*. Conservatism appears in the essay as an industry in which a Washington-New York coterie makes its living identifying the party line and then faithfully following it.

Deviation from the line doesn't result in a loss of life, as it did in Communist Party oligarchies, but in a fate fitting for a free-market society: the loss of livelihood, including direct-mail revenue, foundation bequests, page views, friendly reviews, and ratings. Fidelity to the line, more than talent, determines one's rewards within the movement. So caustic is the piece that the reasoning of Evan Coyne Maloney's neighboring contribution—about dissent from "socially transmitted opinions" on college campuses—could seamlessly change places with Poulos's arguments against careerist conservatism.

The fact that “professional conservatives, as a rule, are more wholly and comfortably committed to their outfit and its practices than the average Marine is to his reinforces the prejudice that professional conservatism is a closed system,” Poulos writes. Surely Ludwig von Mises, finding in his adopted homeland only an untenured professorship at NYU unfunded by the school, and Russell Kirk, who quipped that he would have been “better off frying chicken for Colonel Sanders’s heritors” after paying contributors to *Modern Age* out of his pocket, didn’t adopt their beliefs as an exercise in careerism. But times have changed.

Poulos contends that “amid the endless disruptions of the ’00s, movement wonkery and punditry attained such a preternatural flatline in their ‘message discipline’ that people who were not conservatives for a living could be excused for mistaking caricature for reality.” He continues, noting that “even within the industry, the suspicion can no longer be dismissed that some of conservatism’s marquee institutions and personalities

are too vulnerable to the sort of contemptuous ridicule enjoyed by regular people who are certain that conservatives—*professional* conservatives, above all—must be unfit for life off the reservation, unable and unwilling to function in any truly human environment.”

Poulos’s argument is the latest affirmation of Eric Hoffer’s observation, “What starts out here as a mass movement ends up as a racket, a cult, or a corporation.”

THE MOVEMENT EXISTS TODAY IN THE WAY THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT EXISTS: A CORRUPTION OF ITS FORMER SELF, WAXING NOSTALGICALLY FOR YESTERYEAR’S SYMBOLS WHILE FORGETTING YESTERYEAR’S PRINCIPLES.

A generation coming of age during the last decade—when the advocates of a limited-government philosophy became the lapdogs of a big-government president and traditional conservative warnings against international busybodyism begat taunts of “unpatriotic” by professional conservatives—can be forgiven for its cynicism toward the conservative movement, a phrase now as archaic as “Who Promoted Peress?” or “Don’t Immanentize the Eschaton.” The conservative movement exists today in the way the civil rights movement exists: as a party vehicle, a better-fed corruption of its former self, waxing nostalgically for yesteryear’s symbols while largely forgetting yesteryear’s principles.

If one buys Poulos’s argument, then *Proud to Be Right* offers some reason for optimism. The collection’s editor, Jonah Goldberg, posits that “the strength of conservatism for the last three-quarters of a century has been its disagreements, not its agreements. Conservative dogma remains as unsettled today as it was a generation ago.”

The book Goldberg edits is nothing if not an exhibition of this intellectual diversity. The essays come from all directions, and the reader obtains some enlightenment regarding the complex, competing strands of conservatism. But he does not come away equipped to answer the ques-

tion “what does a conservative believe?”

What do Matt Patterson, who dubs Lucifer “a republican saint for his refusal to bow before a monarch” and finds Lincoln a more worthy “earthly messiah” than Christ, and the home-schooled Caitrin Nicol, who labels the ubiquitous “Coexist” bumpersticker “stupendously annoying,” have in common? Where does the conversation begin for Nathan Harden, a “deviant”

prude in the context of the “hypersexualized” student culture at Yale, and fellow Yalie James Kirchick, who rails against “homophobia” of the kind “heard at assemblies of the Christian Coalition or fringe groups devoted to rolling back the political progress gays had made”? Why is Matthew Lee Anderson’s contention that “economic libertarianism doesn’t sit well with the broadened aims of a newer social conservatism” included in the same book as “Conservatism for Punks,” whose author, Todd Seavey, claims that “this country’s DNA makes us freedom-loving first and foremost”? The inability to reconcile such conflicting positions under the rubric of “conservatism” is less a point of confusion for this book than it is a reality for the Right.

Our strengths can also be our handicaps. It is a benefit that there is no conservative pope formulating official doctrine and excommunicating heretics. It is a weakness that conservatism is so amorphous that so many disparate—indeed, conflicting—outlooks huddle under its banner. What defines something that seems to mean virtually everything? In the wake of the passage of Obamacare, conservatism as a brand has never been more popular. But it would be difficult to claim the same about the principles that allegedly undergird that brand.

MOVING?

Changing your address?

Simply go to **The American Conservative** website, www.amconmag.com

Click “subscribe” and then click “address change.”

To access your account make sure you have your TAC mailing label. You may also subscribe or renew online.

If you prefer to mail your address change send your TAC label with your new address to:

The American Conservative
Subscription Department
P.O. Box 9030
Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030

The ascendance of conservatism the marketing label has coincided with definitional instability. Clearly, conservatism means dramatically different things to different people. Popularity has come at the expense of coherence. But if conservatives can't conserve their own philosophy, what are the prospects for their more grandiose aims of conserving the Republic?

Consider the inclusion here of essayist Joel Pollak. So fervent a liberal that he won election to the leadership of Harvard Law's Democratic Party auxiliary, Pollak toyed with the idea of penning speeches for Barack Obama during his 2008 campaign. In 2010, he was the Republican nominee for Congress in Illinois's 9th district and is touted in *Proud to Be Right* as a voice of young conservatives. Replenishing the ranks with the other side's disillusioned is a good idea; taking your marching orders from them is not. An intellectual inferiority complex seems to compel conservatives to advance as spokesmen any and all men of the Left who turn rightward. The result of this may be displacement rather than assimilation: to what degree have these periodic influxes of liberals into the ranks of conservatism made it resemble earlier versions of liberalism? Then again, Frank Meyer, Max Eastman, Whittaker Chambers, James Burnham, and Ronald Reagan worked out well.

Perhaps Pollak will similarly become a valued thinker or leader on the Right. Or he might wander into some other movement two years from now; worse still, he might maintain a conservative identification while pushing many of the same ideas he held as a young Democrat not so long ago. If conservatism is a strictly political movement, additions can only be welcomed. But if it is something more than a numbers game—anything as ambitious as a philosophy of life or as modest as a general attitude—then the increased supply of conservatives, insofar as it results in the dissolution of conservatism, can't be viewed as an unmitigated boon.

The flaws of *Proud to Be Right* are the flaws of youth. There is the occasional

confusion of the transitory for the enduring—the first essay begins, “Before there was Sarah Palin, there was Mike Huckabee.” Few of these writers on conservatism exhibit any evidence that they are also readers of conservatism. And youth's fetish for the personal narrative, perhaps here editorially imposed, leaves the reader groaning ay-ay-ay at the frequent appearances of “I.”

What shines is the scribblers' flair. Levity abounds. “The best way to convince someone you're right is to make what you're doing look good,” Helen Rittelmeyer explains, “and a cigarette properly held goes a long way in that direction.” Todd Seavey is perplexed by the hipster's embrace of political slogans in light of his cynicism toward corporate marketing: “If TV is lying to you with its advertisements, what on earth is the government doing when it promises to end poverty or racism?” Michael Brendan Dougherty can put a clever phrase to page, dubbing the Iraq War with its dubious justifications “a casus belied,” John T. Flynn and Felix Morley “conservatives before the movement,” and today's begrudging appreciation of yesterday's losers as “a bipartisanship of the past.” Juxtaposing the family-values furor over Murphy Brown's single motherhood with the yawning reaction to the recent Pentagon arrest of an army cook who opted to raise her toddler instead of going to Afghanistan, Dougherty notes of the television character: “If only she wore combat boots.”

Amid its cacophony of voices, *Proud to Be Right* leaves the reader debating whether the future of conservatism is saved by its unwieldy diversity or doomed by its rigid orthodoxies. James Poulos persuasively makes the case that conservatism has embraced a company mentality of conformism. Yet his argument is surrounded by divergent essays that collectively say otherwise. Like most good books, *Proud to Be Right* provokes rather than settles an argument. ■

Daniel J. Flynn is the author of *A Conservative History of the American Left*.

[The Betrayal of American Prosperity: Free Market Delusions, America's Decline, and How We Must Compete in the Post-Dollar Era, Clyde Prestowitz, Free Press, 340 pages]

[How the Economy Was Lost: The War of the Worlds, Paul Craig Roberts, CounterPunch, 264 pages]

Evening in America

By Eamonn Fingleton

GEORGE W. BUSH'S under secretary of commerce for international trade, Frank Lavin, was once described in an official press release as “America's Salesman-in-Chief.” He emerges in a less glorious light in Clyde Prestowitz's new book, *The Betrayal of American Prosperity*.

In a lengthy anecdote, Prestowitz cites Lavin as an archetypal example of the sort of thinking that engineered America's economic trainwreck. Prestowitz, who is president of the Washington-based Economic Strategy Institute, recounts how he contacted Lavin on behalf of FormFactor, a small American technology firm whose patents were being stolen by a Korean competitor. A weakened FormFactor was considering drastic layoffs and being tempted by large grants to move its operations to Singapore. But the firm's founder, a fiesty Russian émigré named Igor Khandros, wanted to save as many American jobs as possible.

Naïvely, perhaps, he set out to enlist the U.S. government's help in cracking down on Korean intellectual property theft. So, accompanied by Prestowitz, he did the rounds in Washington. Lavin was more or less their last hope. Prestowitz writes: “If there was one person in the U.S. government responsible for promoting American exports and the interests of American business abroad, he was the guy. Imagine our sur-

prise then when he responded to our request for help by asking: 'Have you considered moving your operations to Korea or maybe Singapore?'

"Igor nearly fell out of his chair. We didn't bother to tell Lavin that we were talking to him in an effort to avoid moving the company, jobs, and technology out of the United States. ... He wouldn't have understood our values and intentions."

The anecdote goes some way toward explaining why America's trade deficits went from disastrous under Bill Clinton to totally catastrophic under George W. Bush. The result is what will surely be seen by future generations as the fastest implosion of any great power in history.

Again and again Prestowitz shows how for nearly 40 years the American economy has been sold down the river by a dogma-crazed American elite. It is hard to imagine a more depressing story—until you read *How the Economy Was Lost*, a compilation of fiery essays by Paul Craig Roberts.

The two authors share similar backgrounds in that they both served under Ronald Reagan in the "morning in America" years of the early 1980s. In his capacity as an assistant Treasury secretary, Roberts was a principal architect of supply-side economics; Prestowitz was

a top trade negotiator in Office of the United States Trade Representative.

Prestowitz was one of the earliest and most influential experts to hit the panic button about America's deteriorating trade position. His 1988 book *Trading Places* caused a sensation with its superbly written insider's account of Japanese intransigence toward countless American market-opening efforts. He went on to rank with James Fallows, Pat Choate, and Chalmers Johnson as one of the key American "revisionists" who inspired a brief, much publicized spell of hawkishness towards Japanese trade practices two decades ago.

Thereafter he seemed to lose heart. His standing among fellow trade hawks was notably dented in the mid 1990s when he reversed himself on NAFTA—although he had originally pronounced it a job killer, he sided in the end with the globalist lobby in helping ram it through Congress. (His earlier view has, of course, been resoundingly vindicated.) Perhaps even more disappointingly, he remained invisible in the late 1990s as Congress debated China's entry into the World Trade Organization. He now brands that "one of America's dumbest deals."

Roberts came to the trade debate much later than Prestowitz. As his

impassioned essays show, however, he has been making up for lost time. His epiphany came as part of a general disgust with George W. Bush's agenda, not least the Iraq invasion.

While Roberts's essays focus mainly on recent developments, Prestowitz takes a more expansive approach, devoting much space to an extended historical sketch of American trade policy over the last two centuries. The truth, as Prestowitz points out, is that in the country's years of fastest growth, American markets were protected by high tariffs.

As the United States unilaterally dismantled its trade barriers after World War II, other nations predictably increased their share of American markets. Yet this provoked little more than a yawn from the American establishment. He recounts a conversation in the mid 1980s with Herbert Stein, a former chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. Prestowitz voiced concern about Japan's increasing penetration of the American car market. A serene Stein replied, "They will sell us Toyotas and we'll sell them poetry."

This was an elliptical allusion to the then emerging consensus among economic policy analysts in the United States that manufacturing was yesterday's game. Thus nations like Japan and Germany were more or less doing Americans a favor by vaporizing America's "smokestack industries." As the world's leading economy, America supposedly no longer needed manufacturing, and the sooner its workers were redeployed in the all-digital postindustrial economy the better. Uniquely creative Americans would leave the "Rust Belt" behind to provide the world with advanced services such as computer software, financial engineering, various forms of consulting, product design, and scientific research.

As some of us showed at the time, this argument was based on trick logic and ignorance. Yet because it helped justify the elite's free-trade agenda, it continued to be widely promoted until the current crisis hit in 2008.

Subscribe to The American Conservative Today.

Simply go to
www.amconmag.com
and click "Subscribe"
or call

1-800-579-6148



One of the most obvious flaws in the postindustrialism story is that, in contrast with advanced manufacturing, most service industries are poor exporters. Worse, to the extent that certain advanced service products such as computer software can be exported, it has been clear all along that in an age of cheap, instantaneous communications, the jobs would rapidly gravitate to low-wage nations like India and Russia. Computer software has in fact proved even more vulnerable to outsourcing than advanced manufacturing. (Software writing is generally extremely

kept pace with America's over the last two decades. Japan lost ground only in the sense that its population growth was much slower than America's, causing a lag in total Japanese output.

What's more, there are strong grounds for believing that Japanese growth is calculated on more conservative accounting principles than America's. Certainly in many key aspects of consumer welfare Japan visibly outperformed the United States. Prestowitz points out, for instance, that Japan has raced ahead in telecommunications: there were recently about 40 million third-generation cell

argues convincingly that the world economy has changed in ways that render the classical case for free trade inapplicable. He repeatedly cites a 2001 landmark mathematical analysis in which Ralph Gomory and William Baumol holed the classical theory below the water line.

A major subplot in Roberts's book is the amazing growth of H-1B visas, by which corporations in industries like software can bring in thousands of workers from India and other poor nations to labor on American soil at wages far below U.S. norms. He points out that although such visas were originally conceived to address narrow cases where there was a real and serious shortage of capable American workers, they have been issued so promiscuously that they have depressed wage rates. Roberts asks a pertinent question: "What economist has ever heard of a labor shortage leading to flat or declining pay?"

Roberts's diagnosis is dire:

A country whose workforce is employed in domestic non-tradable services is a Third World country with nothing to export. How will the United States pay for its heavy dependence on imports of manufactured goods and energy? ... As long as narrow private interests can cloak themselves in free trade's claim of increased general welfare, the American economy will continue its relative and absolute decline, and American taxpayers will continue to bear the cost of workers displaced by offshoring and work visas.

Of these two authors, Roberts is clearly the more pessimistic. It would be nice to suggest he has overdone the gloom. Unfortunately, the unimpeachable quality of the evidence he brings to the discussion leaves little doubt that America's fate has already been sealed. ■

Eamonn Fingleton is the author of In Praise of Hard Industries: Why Manufacturing, Not the Information Economy, Is the Key to Future Prosperity.

U.S. CORPORATIONS ARE TAKING ON **THE ROLE OF TROJAN HORSES** IN AMERICA'S INCREASINGLY **FRAUGHT RELATIONS WITH CHINA.**

labor intensive, whereas advanced manufacturing is very capital intensive.)

Even many of postindustrialism's erstwhile proponents have come to admit that manufacturing still matters. Better late than never—but it is easier to destroy a nation's industrial base than to rebuild it.

China, of course, has notably employed the one-way free-trade policies by which Japan, Korea, and Taiwan earlier catapulted themselves to the leading edge in key manufacturing industries. Ominously, however, Prestowitz suggests that in the long run America's problem with China may turn out to be more political than economic. As he points out, U.S. corporations are taking on the role of Trojan horses in America's increasingly fraught relations with China. To maximize profits on their China-related activities, such corporations increasingly must pander to Beijing's authorities. One way of doing so is to manipulate American politics to suit China's growth agenda.

A disappointment in Prestowitz's analysis is that he has little to say about Japan. This is a missed opportunity: *pace* American press reports, Japan did not stagnate after the Tokyo stock market crashed in 1990. As Mark Skousen has pointed out, measured on a per capita basis Japan's GDP actually

phones in Japan versus just 1 million in the United States. And thanks to greater deployment of fiber-optic networks, the Internet runs about 16 times faster in Japan than in the United States. A slew of other facts could usefully have been added. Prestowitz makes no mention, for example, of the remarkable strides Japan has made in life expectancy since the 1980s. (The Japanese now outlive Americans by fully five years.)

Prestowitz also overlooks Japan's remarkable trade performance. In the teeth of two back-to-back supposed "lost decades," Japanese exporters have never performed better. Exports to China have done particularly well, with the result that Japan ranks virtually alone among major nations in enjoying a broadly balanced bilateral trade relationship with the new East Asian juggernaut—on China's numbers, Japan actually runs a bilateral surplus. Moreover, a so-called stagnant Japan boosted its overall current-account surplus more than threefold between 1989 and 2008. By contrast, a supposedly vigorous United States saw its current-account deficit balloon sixfold in the period.

Roberts's book is notable for the depth of his intellectual case against globalism. Although he regards himself to this day as a true free trader, he

[*Cosima Wagner: The Lady of Bayreuth*, Oliver Hilmes, Yale University Press, 354 pages]

Wagner's Valkyrie

By R.J. Stove

IMAGINE IF BILLIONS of words had been published about Albert the Prince Consort but nothing of consequence about Queen Victoria. Such is the situation with Wagner historiography: the composer has been analyzed in stupefying depth, but the literature in any language—let alone English—dealing specifically with his relict Cosima is as slender as it has been largely fallacious. Part of the trouble lies in the sheer length of Cosima's lifespan. Born in 1837, she lived till 1930, and throughout her 47-year widowhood she wielded a veto over commentary about either her husband or herself. She could never altogether suppress stray voices of incisive disparagement, but Cosima exerted far more control over her husband's reputation than most artists' spouses ever attain.

For Wagner there had been certain musical precedents; for Cosima as estate-manager there were none. Earlier wives of great composers, even when avoiding poverty, had been content to die in obscurity. Bach's widow escaped outright hunger solely thanks to welfare payments, most of them from Leipzig's city council. Only Mozart's widow Constanze managed to make her relationship to genius a profitable one, and her reward was to be despised by her husband's biographers as little better than a greedy airhead.

Despising the imperious Cosima was not an option. She saw herself not just as custodian of Richard's legacy—above all in the festival town of Bayreuth—but as chief mourner at a never-ending funeral. She fired off commands to family members, friends, and foes alike with a diligence exceptional even by the

pre-telephone era's graphomaniac standards. To Bavaria's King Ludwig II she sent 127 letters and telegrams; to one of her daughters, Daniela, she wrote no fewer than 2,346 epistles. No detail of her husband's art was too trivial to attract her—usually censorious—concern. And no admirer of this art was so sycophantic that she could not cut him off at the kneecaps if he suddenly displeased her.

One persistently hostile journalist named Maximilian Harden concluded, in a reluctant tribute to her strong-arm tactics, "Bayreuth is the creation of her [Cosima's] own brain, and she alone is its destiny." That about sums it up. So overachieving a woman should have been a godsend for numerous scholarly biographers, surely; but no. Before the present study appeared, much of Bayreuth's archival material by or about Cosima had scarcely been looked at by researchers. Most previous books about her have been either novels—including one from 1939 entitled *The Young Cosima* by Australia's Henry Handel Richardson, to which for some reason Oliver Hilmes nowhere alludes—or hagiographies. At first, Cosima-related literature consisted largely of family-authorized exercises in pan-German

his mistress, Marie d'Agoult, than his itinerant impulses became irrepressible. Not once did he condescend to visit Cosima between her seventh and her 16th years. After being more or less dumped upon Liszt's patient mother, who gave her whatever family affection she had, Cosima was subjected to the remote-control tyranny of Liszt's new innamorata: Carolynne zu Sayn-Wittgenstein, whose 24-volume theological *magnum opus* ended up on the Vatican's Index, and whose notions of child care consisted of inflicting on the child a governess fully comparable in ferocity to her counterparts in Victorian England.

Repeated reading of Thomas a Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* helped keep Cosima sane, both in youth and later. (In her 39th year she confided to her diary her taste for "this strange ecstasy of suffering.") Eventually she paid back her father and stepmother with interest. When Liszt fell fatally sick, she refused to let him be given the last rites. She also helped to ensure that at the obsequies, as Hilmes writes, "not a note of Liszt's own music was heard," and no flag at Bayreuth would fly at half-mast. Carolynne had hoped that Liszt would be buried in Hungary, but Cosima would have none of that either. Within

THE IMPERIOUS COSIMA SAW HERSELF NOT JUST AS CUSTODIAN OF RICHARD'S LEGACY—ABOVE ALL IN THE FESTIVAL TOWN OF BAYREUTH—BUT AS CHIEF MOURNER AT A NEVER-ENDING FUNERAL.

humbug. Later efforts included *Cosima La Sublime* by the late French women's magazine editor Françoise Giroud, better known, ungallant critics maintained, for sporting Resistance medals well in excess of those which her actual Resistance record justified than for any feats of academic investigation.

"More or less everything about Cosima Wagner," as Hilmes notes, "seems extraordinary." She never recovered from the stigma of her, and her two siblings', birth out of wedlock. Scarcely had Franz Liszt fathered this brood upon

seven months of being thus vanquished, the once domineering Carolynne breathed her last. "I genuinely think," Cosima mewed sweetly to her daughter Daniela, "that the defeat that she suffered over the transfer of Grandpapa's remains dealt her a blow from which she was unable to recover. She had to submit, and with that she died."

Cosima's relations with her first husband, the brilliant and neurotic pianist-conductor Hans von Bülow, are best described in Lord Tennyson's words about Thomas and Jane Carlyle: "had he

not married her, then *four* people would have been made unhappy.” What an abortive suicide pact with an equally miserable male friend of Bülow’s could not manage by way of marital destruction, Wagner’s arrival effected. After Wagner’s seduction of Cosima became a public scandal, both guilty parties “browbeat the king [Ludwig] into committing an act of perjury” by signing a Wagner-drafted press release “to declare the Bülows’ honor inviolate.” Hilmes understandably asks of Bülow: “Why did he put up with it all? Why did he not take Wagner to task? Why did he not simply announce that their friendship was over?” Reverence for Wagner’s genius played a part in Bülow’s refusal to take punitive action against the composer, but for sheer intensity Bülow’s general masochism came near to matching Cosima’s.

Within Cosima’s soul, as Hilmes shrewdly observes, masochism and Jew-hatred “were two sides of the same coin.” Wagner’s own Jew-hatred, expounded at near-interminable length in theory, had limited connection with his practice. Should Wagner happen to like individuals their ancestry mattered little or nothing to him. But Cosima regarded all Jews as enemies, or rather, as *The Enemy*. As late as 1919 she gloated over the shooting of Munich’s socialist boss Kurt Eisner, whom she called “the Galician Semite. ... In my eyes Count Arco [Eisner’s assassin] is a martyr.” Cosima’s Judeophobia remained entirely instinctive and paranoid, and sprang not from religion but from a visceral craving for a group—any group—whom even she could despise.

Raised Catholic, she converted to Lutheranism in 1872 at Wagner’s behest and received communion according to the Lutheran liturgy; but she retained a fondness for Catholicism’s devotions. In a Germany that still attached vast significance to confessional differences the mixed doctrinal messages of Cosima’s belief system can have done nothing to improve her mental well-being.

Wagner’s sudden death in 1883 enabled Cosima to assume her domineering role. Already she had discov-

ered that she could get practically every desire provided she gave the impression that her demands derived from Wagner himself. This channeling of her husband’s wishes prompted another outstanding pianist, Carl Tausig, to call her “the Delphic oracle.” With Wagner gone, nobody could challenge her interpretations of *Der Meister*’s wants. Certainly not their hapless son, Siegfried, timid

EVEN KAISER WILHELM II THOUGHT TWICE BEFORE DOING ANYTHING TO TRIGGER COSIMA’S ANNOYANCE. HINDENBURG ALONE AMONG GERMAN RULERS WON HER WHOLEHEARTED APPROVAL.

and blustering by turns, who enraged his mother by his homosexual affairs and whose family status can be epitomized by William Faulkner’s gibe at his daughter: “Who the f--k ever heard of Shakespeare’s daughter?” (Siegfried, abhorring Richard Strauss’s enthusiasm for the profit motive, once sarcastically asked him if business had gone well. Strauss’s retort: “Yes, and it’s my business, not my father’s.”)

Even Kaiser Wilhelm II thought twice before doing anything to trigger Cosima’s annoyance. Hindenburg alone among German rulers won her wholehearted approval. She never forgave President Friedrich Ebert or Chancellor Wilhelm Marx for cold-shouldering Bayreuth in the 1920s. The young Hitler charmed her greatly—when all else failed they could always exchange anti-Semitic anecdotes—but one suspects that had she lived to witness the Third Reich, *Der Führer*, quite as much as any Weimar Republic politician, would have found her unmanageable.

She was a woman of frequently horrifying fascination whose majestic deportment lost nothing through her lapse, near the very end, into intermittent dementia. (Siegfried, with that ill-luck which never left him, survived Cosima by a mere four months.) Naturally she insisted on being buried beside Wagner, and in the gardens of “Wahnfried,” the Bayreuth family home, they repose. She

still presided in spirit over Bayreuth’s stagings, although Siegfried’s English-born widow Winifred (*née* Williams) controlled the festival’s actual administration from 1930 till 1945. Only after the war, when a de-Nazification tribunal banned Winifred Wagner from further festival management, did Cosima’s influence fade. Her scrupulously naturalistic productions—following virtually every

stage direction her husband had written into his scores—were junked in favor of symbolist and Jung-saturated designs by Winifred’s elder son, Wieland.

Hilmes’s achievement is as remarkable as that of Cosima herself, if not more so. He has disclosed so many unfamiliar primary sources relevant to her thinking, has so shrewdly assessed all documentation (new or old), and has conveyed his discoveries in such a translucent account—flawlessly translated, as far as a mere reviewer can judge, from the original German—that no future authors should attempt to tackle the subject at book length. He has furnished us with one of the very best musical biographies to have enriched the English language in decades. ■

R.J. Stove lives in Melbourne, Australia, and is the author of A Student’s Guide to Music History.

Visit our blog

@TAC 
www.amconmag.com/blog

updated daily



American Graffiti

My lovely literate wife Lucine—"Armenian for Darlene," I type out of habit, and wince at the thought of the shoe flying across the room—recently reviewed for

the local library one of those pop-anthropological books in which a big-city reporter spends a few weeks in a small town and lives to tell the tale.

I'll withhold the book's title, since Lucine said the author meant well, and besides, when a really egregious target waddles into my sights I've become like my dad hunting deer—I shoot wide and low and let it lollop away. When I was a mere stripling I'd blast the bastard, but I was so much older then, I'm younger than that now.

The latest Margaret Mead in Podunk committed this sentence: "It's easy to spot someone who grew up in a small town and got out: they have a breathless air about them, their expressions somehow startled and dreamy."

Talk about the shock of unrecognition: What the hell does that mean? My wife teased a few laughs from its sheer obtuseness. And if anyone can spot the startled dreaminess of exiles from Elm Street it ought to be Lucine, a Southern Cal gal turned rural Yorker who stubbornly resists my kindly efforts to compress her into the John Mellencamp line: "Married an LA doll and brought her to this small town / Now she's small town, just like me."

Actually, as town supervisor and emcee of the Onion Queen Pageant, she makes me look like a regular boulevardier, but I suppose as a native I can be identified by some hidden Lovecraftian nodule.

Where this latest tourist among the rustics goes wrong is in not crediting the stay-at-homes with the capacity to

dream and in not noticing that some of those who "got out" dream of returning—a return barred, so often, by the poisonous assumption that success in America can be measured in the distance one has traveled from home.

My friend Patrick Deneen, who teaches political theory at Georgetown, has written on the decentralist website Front Porch Republic of interviewing at a college (much less prestigious than Georgetown) near his hometown in Connecticut:

I was inordinately excited at this possibility, thinking that it might work out that my wife and I and newborn son might be able to settle close to family and childhood friends. When asked about accommodations, I proudly informed the college that I would be staying in my bedroom that night—my childhood bedroom, that is. During the two day interview I related in every conversation that I was native to the area and had a longstanding relationship to the campus, having attended its plays, movies, and used its library for many years. I believed my local connection would make me an especially attractive candidate, sure in the knowledge that a school would be attracted to someone who already had deep roots in the community and was likely to build a long life and career in that place.

In fact, Patrick writes, "this proud display of my nativeness went over

badly." The American professional class does not just accept rootlessness as the cost of achievement—it positively fetishizes it. And so it is befuddled—startled, even—when confronted by a Deneen.

Levon Helm of Turkey Scratch, Arkansas, drummer for The Band and a great American, described a cotton-farming guitar player from Elaine, Arkansas, named Thurlow Brown: "He could have been famous, but he didn't like leaving his farm, so he never broke out of our area."

My hero!

Thurlow Brown of Elaine is worth every deracinated novelist who ever took a table at Elaine's. But how do we convince young Thurlow Browns to ignore the synthesized drumbeat that tells our children that to stay at home is the act of a loser, and that if you're not in NY, LA, or DC you're nowhere?

When another Front Porcher, the reprobate wit Jason Peters, cracked open the treasury of Augustana College a while back to have me out to hector his students, we did a little post-lecture proselytizing in the Quad Cities.

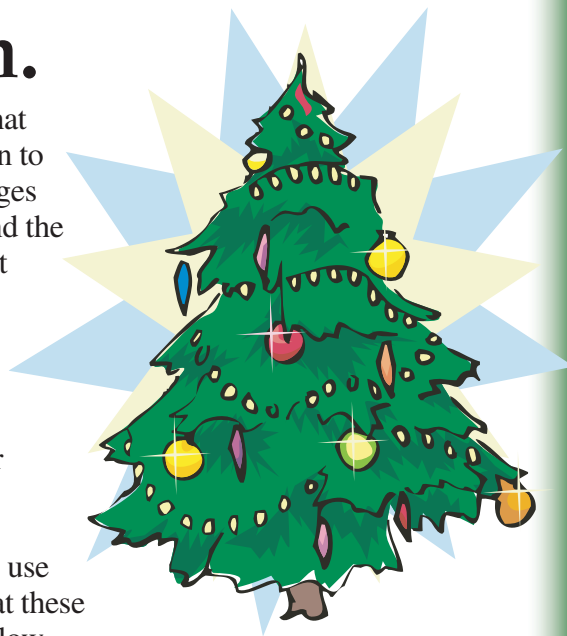
Midnight settled on Davenport, Iowa, home of the late 19th-century local color novelist Octave Thanet. Fearing that her tones had been forgotten by the town she never forsook, and wondering just how I might interest the rantipole youths and roistering blades of Davenport in their native daughter, I took to decorating the men's rooms of that fair city with obscene graffiti about Octave's amative practices.

Forgive me, Octave, baby. I didn't know what else to do. Lacking the "breathless air" of those who "got out," you and Thurlow and I dream on. ■

Give **The American Conservative** this Christmas season.

Are you looking for a Christmas gift that is unique and that lasts throughout the coming year? Give a gift subscription to **The American Conservative**—a magazine that challenges the prevailing orthodoxy of the political establishment and the over-stretching imperialism of our foreign policy and that forcefully restates the case for our Republic's founding principles. Getting that message out will be especially important in 2011.

You can obtain a full year's subscription (12 issues) to **The American Conservative** for the first person on your gift list for just \$29, a whopping \$20.97 savings on our basic subscription price. And you pay only \$24 for additional Christmas gifts you order today. (You can also use this special opportunity to renew your own subscription at these same record-low rates!) Just fill out and mail the form below.



You can also place your gift order immediately, by calling us toll-free at ☎ **1-800-579-6148** or visiting www.amconmag.com.

Thank you very much for sharing in this mission with us. Help us spread the word by making **The American Conservative** part of your Christmas shopping! You won't regret it ... and neither will the people on your gift subscription list!

My name _____
(please print)

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

G10123338

Here are the names of friends I would like to present with a Christmas gift subscription to

The American Conservative:

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Sign gift card from: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Sign gift card from: _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Sign gift card from: _____

☐ **Please include my own subscription renewal.**

☐ Bill me.

☐ I am paying by check (\$29 for the first one-year/12-issue gift subscription, \$24 for each additional gift), payable to **The American Conservative**.

☐ I prefer to pay with my credit card. Charge my:



Account No.: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Signature: _____

The American Conservative • Subscription Dept. • P.O. Box 9030 • Maple Shade, NJ 08052-9030



Breathe Catholic.

Recognized as one of America's premier Catholic liberal arts colleges, we offer our students a fully Catholic education, integrating Faith and Reason, while immersing them in a vibrant Catholic culture on our beautiful campus in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia.



Our extensive core curriculum and outstanding faculty, along with our unique Junior Semester in Rome Program, make our academic program one of the most demanding in the nation. And our community life – based on the ageless traditions of the Catholic Church – is second to none.



From the classroom to the chapel, the residence halls to the cafeteria, the athletic field to the dance floor, Catholicism joyfully lived is the air that we breathe, preparing our students to lead the New Evangelization.

Take a deep breath and immerse yourself.



CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE

134 Christendom Drive, Front Royal, Virginia

800.877.5456 www.christendom.edu



ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED